

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS (COOP) PLANNING MANUAL**



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## **FOREWORD**

This manual was developed to provide guidance to local governments for the development and maintenance of Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans. COOP planning is the effort to ensure that essential functions can continue across a wide range of potential events and is the process of maintaining the business of a local government. This manual is intended to offer both procedural and operational guidance for the preparation and implementation of a COOP plan. It reflects Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Guidelines, Federal Continuity Directive 1 (FCD1), Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1600 standards, VDEM standards and best practices.

The main tools in this manual are the worksheets and the Basic and Department COOP plan templates, which correspond with the seven phases of the COOP planning process. Completing the worksheets assists in assembling the information necessary to develop the critical elements of a COOP plan, which are addressed in the manual.

Because local governments have diverse missions and unique characteristics, each COOP plan developed from this manual will address the specific needs of the jurisdiction. Filling in the worksheets is not a substitute for developing a plan; the worksheets are tools that help local governments gather the information needed to prevent a loss of critical government services during events.

The COOP plan will consist of a basic plan and department plan. The basic plan outlines the jurisdiction-wide considerations for guiding the overall COOP program. Each department plan captures critical operational data that supports each department during COOP plan implementation. In conjunction with the information gathered by the worksheets, the templates assist in completing a cohesive and comprehensive COOP plan specific to each local government's mission and needs.

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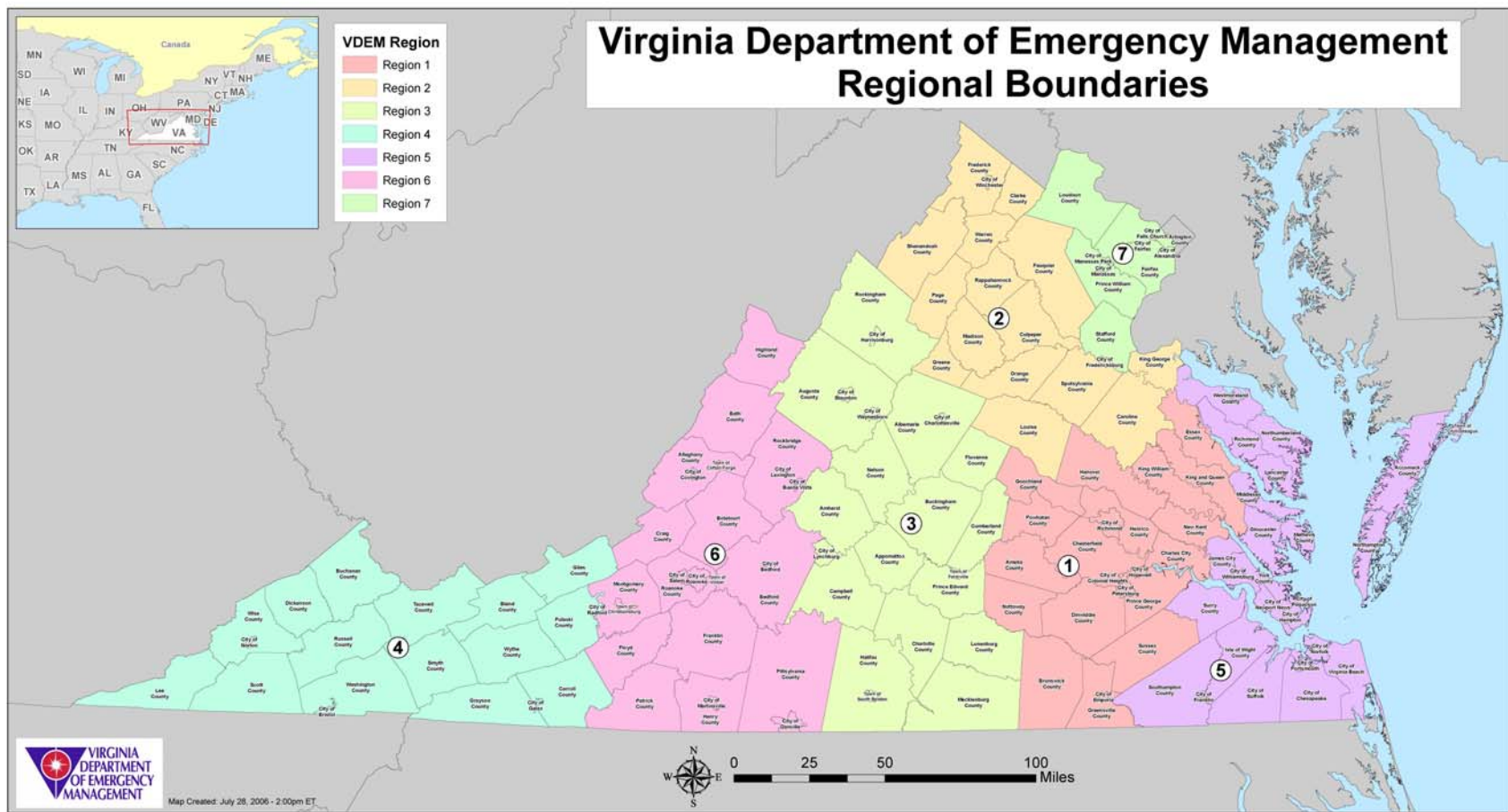
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# Local Government COOP Planning Manual

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local government leadership has become increasingly aware of how disasters and emergencies could disrupt, paralyze or destroy the capabilities to preserve government and perform essential governmental functions. Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning is designed to develop and maintain a program that enables local governments to preserve and maintain their capability to function effectively in the event of a disaster or emergency, which could potentially disrupt critical operations and services. A COOP plan is designed to address the following events:

- Loss of access to a facility or building (as in a fire), forcing relocation to an alternate site;
- Loss or reduction of services due to a reduction in workforce (as in pandemic influenza); and
- Loss of services due to equipment or system failure (as in Information Technology (IT) or telecommunications disruption).

COOP planning is one component of a local government's comprehensive emergency management program that addresses the preparation for, mitigation of, response to and recovery from disasters of all hazards. By focusing on efforts to continue the essential functions of the jurisdiction, COOP planning ensures that the government continues to operate—even in the wake of a major event.

It is important for local governments to understand a COOP plan is not an evacuation plan, Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) or hazard mitigation plan, which are described in Phase I – Project Initiation (page 10). A comprehensive COOP program allows local governments to capture their day-to-day activities within a plan and to focus on those essential functions that will continue during and after the initial response to an emergency situation.

### **Preparations for COOP Planning: Developing and Reviewing Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Strategies**

If the local government has not already completed a risk and assessment, this process should be done prior to developing a COOP plan. Risk is the potential for exposure to loss, which can be determined by using either qualitative or quantitative measures. Vulnerability is a weakness that can subject the organization to a risk, or worsen its impact. Identifying and assessing the vulnerabilities of a local government, and the risks it faces, helps to ensure the most likely risks, with the greatest potential impacts, are considered. These risks can then be mitigated against and planned for. The risk and vulnerability assessment documents help to prioritize the vulnerabilities and risks faced by a local government.

Local government personnel who perform essential functions should be familiar with the risks and vulnerabilities of their department processes and facilities, and recognize how those risks could affect their essential functions. Knowledge of potential risks and vulnerabilities gives them the opportunity to consider possible mitigation strategies that could be used to alleviate some or all of the risks. For example, assessing a facility's location and realizing that an essential piece of information technology hardware, like a server, is located in the basement that has the potential to flood is a risk that needs to be addressed. The mitigation strategy may be to relocate the equipment or elevate it so it is not at risk for flooding.

Risk mitigation strategies can be developed to address locality-, facility- and function-based risks. Examples include:

- **Locality-based risk.** Severe storms impact the whole community. Are there enough personnel and resources to respond effectively?
- **Facility-based risk.** This could include a building that is located in a flood plain. Are there vital records, equipment or systems located in the basement?
- **Function-based risk.** An example could be a lack of cross-training or back-up personnel for payroll. If the one person who does payroll is unavailable or could not get to work, could someone else perform the function?

If a risk assessment has not been done previously, **Worksheets #14** and **#15** can assist in identifying risks. Local governments should reference their Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies the specific or unique risks facing the jurisdiction and its personnel, facilities and services. After identifying each risk, mitigation strategies can be developed and implemented to reduce exposure to known hazards.

The COOP Team and department leadership can use the information regarding risks to the department's operations and facilities to make strategic decisions that reduce or eliminate risk. Reduction or elimination of risks to facilities or operations also substantially reduces risks to personnel.

## **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PROGRAM**

A COOP program is the process of developing the COOP plan and the activities local governments should take to maintain their readiness. This manual addresses the components of a COOP program, which include:

- Identifying the COOP Team;
- Developing the COOP plan;
- Institutionalizing testing, training, revision and maintenance activities;
- Establishing yearly budget support;
- Securing local leadership support;
- Establishing and maintaining protection methods for vital records, systems and equipment;
- Implementing cross-training for key personnel ;
- Establishing mutual-aid agreements for facilities and personnel; and
- Integrating a Continuity of Government (COG) plan into the COOP program.

While COOP activities support the continuance of essential government functions, a COG plan addresses the continuance of constitutional governance and ensures the command and control of government operations. A COG plan also focuses on activities to support the succession of leadership for elected officials in the event of death or incapacitation. Thus COOP and COG are integral to ensuring that government and its essential functions continue during an emergency.

Although this manual assists local governments in the development of a COOP plan and program, it is important for local governments to understand how these plans work together.

Local governments should develop a COG plan to ensure they can preserve, maintain and reconstitute their ability to operate during an emergency situation that disrupts government operations. Local governments should consult with their attorney to review statutory law or ordinances which define the succession of leadership for their elected officials and ensure plans are in place to transfer authority.

## CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING

COOP planning is the start of a long-term program to help a local government maintain or recover its ability to provide essential services to its citizens and personnel. As mentioned previously, a COOP plan is designed to address the following:

- Loss of access to a facility;
- Loss of services due to a reduction in workforce; and
- Loss of services due to equipment or system failure.

Although planning for catastrophes is important, equally important is preparing for events more likely to occur. For example, the probability is much higher that a local government will face impacts caused by fire, high winds or flooding than by a catastrophic event. Even more frequent are relatively minor emergencies caused by electrical storms, minor hazardous material spills, heavy rains and snow or ice storms that can still interrupt operations. Lack of preparation for common hazards can quickly worsen their impacts, escalating danger and damage to people and facilities. While threats vary, clearly, the better prepared a jurisdiction is, the more effective its ability to ensure safety and continue operations, regardless of the incident.

### COOP Planning Objectives

Federal Continuity Directive 1 (FCD 1) outlines objectives of a continuity plan. These objectives have been modified to fit the needs of localities and adopted by VDEM as a best practice.

- Ensuring that a locality can perform its essential functions under all conditions.
- Reducing the loss of life and minimizing property damage and loss.
- Executing successful order of succession with accompanying delegation of authorities in the event a disruption renders locality leadership and key personnel unavailable or incapable of assuming or performing their responsibilities.
- Reducing or mitigating disruptions to operations.
- Ensuring that a locality has facilities where it can continue to perform its essential functions during a continuity event.
- Protecting personnel, facilities, equipment, records and other assets in the event of a disruption.
- Achieving a timely and orderly recovery and reconstitution from an emergency.
- Ensuring and validating continuity readiness through a dynamic and integrated continuity test, training and exercise program and operational capability.

## **COOP Planning Considerations**

While Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) - 65 was superseded by FCD 1 it outlined planning considerations and requirements for federal agency COOP plans. These considerations and requirements are still valid and VDEM still recognizes them as best practices.

- Be capable of implementing its COOP plans with or without warning;
- Be operational no later than 12 hours after activation;
- Capable of performing essential functions for up to 30 days;
- Include training, testing and exercise schedules for personnel, equipment, systems, processes and procedures utilized during COOP plan implementation;
- Provide for a regular risk analysis of current alternate operating facilities;
- Locate alternate facilities in areas where the ability to initiate, maintain and terminate COOP is optimal; and
- Develop a multi-year strategy and program management plan.

## **COOP Team**

The COOP Team includes department or division-level management who understand the internal operations or “business” of the local government and have authority in the functional areas they represent.

The COOP Team is directly involved with daily operations, including strategies and tactics to implement the COOP plan as an integral part of the day-to-day functions of the jurisdiction. Administration, Finance, Public Works, Public Safety and others who have emergency management responsibilities should all be included in the planning process. This will be addressed in greater detail in Phase I: Project Initiation.

## **COOP Program Organization**

While the COOP plan serves as the guide during activation and recovery, the COOP program is the framework and guidance that makes COOP planning an ongoing activity for the jurisdiction. The structure of the program creates specific roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for plan development, maintenance and execution. It fosters COOP planning as a part of day-to-day operations through:

Program administration, including:

- Designating a program manager or coordinator;
- Establishing goals, objectives and evaluation standards; and
- Developing procedures and planning schedules, including milestones and deliverables.

Program elements, including:

- Performing risk assessments;
- Developing incident prevention and mitigation strategies;
- Establishing resource management and logistics processes; and

- Determining needs and opportunities for mutual aid or other assistance.

### Elements of a COOP Plan

This manual addresses the ten critical elements of a COOP plan:

- Essential Functions;
- Orders of Succession;
- Delegations of Authority;
- Alternate Facilities;
- Interoperable Communications;
- Vital Records, Systems and Equipment;
- Human Capital Management;
- Training, Testing and Exercises;
- Devolution; and
- Reconstitution.

These elements are intertwined and dependent upon one another. They enable a plan to be effectively implemented during an event. When properly identified the COOP elements also allow for a seamless transition back to normal operations at the primary facility.

### Creating a COOP Plan

This manual presents the COOP planning process in seven distinct phases:

- I. Project Initiation;
- II. Identification of Functional Requirements;
- III. Design and Development;
- IV. Publication and Dissemination;
- V. Training, Testing and Exercises;
- VI. Implementation; and
- VII. Maintenance.

Each process contains a set of tasks that need to be completed to develop an effective COOP plan.

**Table 1**  
**COOP Planning Phase Specific Tasks**

COOP Planning Phase	Phase Specific Tasks
I. Project Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Appoint a COOP Coordinator</li> <li>■ Organize a local COOP Team</li> <li>■ Identify and review current planning documents</li> <li>■ Identify personnel hours and budget</li> </ul>

COOP Planning Phase	Phase Specific Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct an initial working group session</li> </ul>
II. Identification of Functional Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify Essential Functions</li> <li>■ Identify Vital Records, Systems and Equipment</li> <li>■ Name Key Personnel</li> <li>■ Establish Orders of Succession</li> <li>■ Establish Delegations of Authority</li> <li>■ Secure an alternate facility</li> <li>■ Determine interoperable communications</li> </ul>
III. Design and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Define COOP document scope</li> <li>■ Enter gathered data into COOP templates</li> </ul>
IV. Publication and Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Publish the COOP plan</li> <li>■ Present the COOP plan to the entire jurisdiction</li> <li>■ Educate all personnel on their roles and responsibilities associated with COOP plan implementation</li> </ul>
V. Training, Testing and Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assess and validate COOP plans, policies and procedures</li> <li>■ Ensure that personnel are familiar with COOP plan implementation</li> <li>■ Ensure that COOP personnel are sufficiently trained to carry out essential functions during COOP plan implementation</li> <li>■ Conduct periodic COOP exercises</li> <li>■ Implement after action reports</li> </ul>
VI. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outline an executive decision process</li> <li>■ Determine activation and relocation, alternate facility operations and reconstitution procedures</li> <li>■ Create checklists for COOP plan implementation</li> </ul>
VII. Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Institute a multi-year program management plan</li> <li>■ Ensure the COOP plan is maintained and updated</li> </ul>

## **PHASE I – PROJECT INITIATION**

Project initiation includes the first steps required to establish a COOP program. A COOP program guides the jurisdiction's COOP planning efforts. It is the infrastructure that ensures effective planning is a consistent and ongoing part of the jurisdiction. For local governments without a COOP program, this section is intended to guide the COOP Team through the process of establishing the key components to build one. If there is an existing COOP program, these activities have probably already been performed and do not necessarily apply. If a review of the existing COOP program identifies some possible improvements or missing components, selected activities in this phase may be helpful.

The project initiation phase consists of the following:

- Appointing a COOP Coordinator;
- Organizing a local COOP Team;
- Identifying and reviewing current planning documents;
- Identifying personnel hours and a budget; and
- Conducting an initial working group session.

### **Appointing a COOP Coordinator**

The first step in the COOP planning process is selecting a COOP Coordinator, also known as the Point-of-Contact (POC). Although the head of the local government may act as the POC, it is often best for that person to designate another individual who can devote the necessary time to the project.

The COOP Coordinator should be someone who is familiar with the local government practices and the hazards the jurisdiction faces. It is helpful, but not always necessary, that this person be someone with the authority to develop, exercise and implement plans. The COOP Coordinator should also be someone with good leadership and communications skills and the ability to build consensus and support for the program. Responsibilities of the COOP Coordinator include:

- Developing short- and long-term goals and objectives;
- Assisting in the identification of planning team members;
- Creating a blueprint for developing the COOP program;
- Identifying and assisting in resolving issues related to COOP plan development, activation, implementation and reconstitution;
- Developing criteria for measuring and evaluating COOP performance;
- Acting as a liaison between the COOP Team and local government leaders; and
- Serving as the leader of the COOP Team.

### **Organizing a Local COOP Team**

COOP planning is a team effort. The COOP Coordinator should organize a COOP Team composed of individuals from a variety of departments and divisions of the local government.



The intent is to gather an appropriate balance between operational knowledge and authority within the functional areas represented by the members. A COOP Team typically consists of eight to 12 members, the actual number depends on the size of the local government, the functions performed and services provided.

- When organizing the COOP Team, local governments should include departments that supply infrastructure or support services. A jurisdiction might also want to consider consulting outside resources such as the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Some examples include (department names may vary):
- Public Works;
- Information Technology;
- Law Enforcement;
- Emergency Management;
- Fire;
- Finance;
- Risk Management;
- Purchasing;
- Social Services;
- Human Resources;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Facilities or Maintenance; and
- Legal.

COOP Team members may act as COOP Coordinators for their respective department. At the first working group session, the COOP Team might discuss strategy and requirements and identify policies and procedures needed to address COOP planning issues. The role of the COOP Team includes, but is not limited to:

- Developing a mission statement for the COOP Team and program;
- Establishing objectives and milestones;
- Establishing a meeting schedule;
- Establishing a testing and exercise cycle;
- Establishing a review and maintenance cycle;
- Establishing procedures to distribute COOP planning worksheets;
- Advocating for adequate funding to accomplish the organization's COOP strategy; and
- Identifying department-specific management and policy issues and potential solutions.

## Identifying and Reviewing Current Planning Documents

During the Project Initiation Phase, the COOP Coordinator or COOP Team should review current documents that will assist in the development and implementation of the COOP plan. Information should be gathered from current EOPs, Occupant Emergency Plans (OEPs), the Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan and Standard Operating Procedures. Definitions are listed below. This effort will identify information that may be valuable in developing the COOP plan.

- **Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)** – Assure an integrated response among multiple agencies, public and private, from within a community and outside the area. EOPs should describe the principles, policies, authorities, concepts of operations, legal constraints, responsibilities and emergency functions to be performed when carrying out emergency operations and rendering mutual aid during events. EOPs should include such elements as emergency functions of government agencies, mobilization of resources and public information. A summary of the COOP or COG plans may also be apart of the EOP.
- **Occupant Emergency Plans (OEPs)** – Address how personnel can be evacuated from their workstations and buildings to a safer area. OEPs are an essential part of an emergency management program.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan** – Identifies policies, activities, and tools needed to implement mitigation actions. Mitigation is defined as any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risks to life and property from any and all hazard events.
- **Information Technology Disaster Recovery (ITDR) Plan** – Provide for the continuity, restoration and recovery of critical computer data, systems and services.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** – Jurisdictional or departmental directives that establish a standard course of action for how the department will operate. SOPs are written guidelines that explain what is expected and required of personnel in performing their day-to-day functions.

Although not all jurisdictions have these plans, any existing plans may be good resources to consider. Assuming they have been kept current, the information gathered might save the COOP Team time in gathering information for the COOP plan.

## Identifying Personnel Hours and Budget

COOP planning cannot be successful unless senior leadership establishes COOP planning as a priority for the local government. Estimating the number of personnel hours, meetings and funding required for maintaining this priority will enable senior leadership, departments and personnel to incorporate COOP activities into their daily workload. If COOP planning is not an established priority, personnel might find it difficult to dedicate the time necessary to develop the COOP plan. It is recommended that the chief elected official or appointed official in a local government send a letter or memo to all department heads to encourage the involvement of themselves and their personnel. This will help personnel re-prioritize in the short-term to assist in the planning process.

## **Conduct Initial Working Group Session**

The initial working group session with the COOP Team is designed to establish key components of the overarching COOP program for the local government. The agenda should include the following:

- Developing the standards and guidelines for the COOP program;
- Organizing the COOP Team, including the team's mission statement;
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of individual members and the team as a whole;
- Defining the COOP Team objectives and deliverables to ensure that work undertaken is relevant to the requirements of the project;
- Establishing the project milestones to enable progress to be tracked against an approved schedule;
- Establishing the review and approval process; and
- Coordinating with external response agencies (e.g. local, state and federal agencies, vendors and local businesses).

The initial working group session is also an opportunity for the COOP Team and department heads to receive initial COOP training to understand the importance of COOP plans and how they are utilized in local governments. Additional working group sessions might be needed to address the overarching COOP program elements.

## PHASE II – FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COOP PLANNING

At the end of this phase, local governments will be able to successfully determine the functional requirements of a COOP plan. Phase II focuses on identifying essential functions and the required facilities, equipment, records, personnel and other resources needed to perform those essential functions during an event.

To gather functional requirements for planning, there is a three-step approach that a local government can use:

- Identify essential functions;
- Prioritize essential functions; and
- Determine essential function resource requirements.

### Essential Functions

Every local government provides a wide variety of services. The task of determining which of those services are essential during an event may be challenging. Throughout the planning phase, the COOP Team will work with senior leadership to identify essential functions performed by each department.

Essential functions are those functions that enable a local government to:

- Provide vital services;
- Exercise civil authority;
- Maintain the safety of the general public; and
- Sustain the industrial and economic base of the area during an event.

In other words, essential functions are a local government's business functions that must continue with no, or minimal, disruption.

### Identify Essential Functions

During initial stages of COOP planning, local governments will need to establish their essential functions. Essential functions are the building blocks of an effective COOP plan; information gathered from this point forward is based on those identified essential functions.

When identifying essential functions, localities should remember that even though many functions are important, not every activity the local government performs must be sustained during an event.

There is no one way to identify essential functions; however, the following methods may expedite the identification process. **First, evaluate the functions that provide critical resources or services to the jurisdiction.** For example, 911 emergency communications provide the critical link between citizens and emergency response agencies such as fire, police or emergency medical assistance and thus are essential to any local government. Likewise, Public Works personnel clear roads of snow or debris. **Second, review those services that are required by law or regulations.** For example, providing water and wastewater services may be mandatory via state and federal regulations for local governments. **Third, review the current**

**budget.** For example, if a jurisdiction had to cut a department budget by 10 percent, what services would continue to be provided? Which services would you curtail or cease? Reviewing the budget will help jurisdictions identify those “core functions” that are necessary for continuation of services and therefore deemed “essential.”

Another way to identify essential functions is to identify the areas of responsibility for the jurisdiction. A jurisdiction can utilize its mission statement, values and legal authorities to help define its responsibility.

Examples of functions commonly provided by local governments that may be considered essential include:

- Preservation of life and property (public safety, including police, fire and emergency medical services);
- 911 Emergency Communications;
- Solid waste operations;
- Social and human services;
- Payroll and employee relations;
- Public information;
- Cash flow management; and
- Investment of local government funds.

Just because a function is listed as supportive and not essential, does not mean it is not important. It simply implies that the particular function is not necessary in the immediate aftermath of an event. During COOP plan implementation, personnel whose functions are deemed not “essential” but “supportive” could assist or augment personnel performing essential functions. Examples of support functions include:

- Public library services;
- Recreational classes; and
- Administering life insurance programs.

The ability to distinguish between essential and supportive functions enables local leadership to effectively allocate necessary resources during COOP plan implementation.

### **Prioritize Essential Functions**

During an event, a jurisdiction has limited resources to get operations back to normal; therefore, it is important to prioritize essential functions.

To help prioritize functions, determine the recovery time objective (RTO) for each function. The RTO is the maximum time period that a function or service can be interrupted before it must be restored to an acceptable level of operation. For some functions the RTO may be zero, for example, the emergency communications system for a local government has an RTO of zero or none.

The COOP Team determines the sequence of essential function recovery for the local government by using RTOs. Considering the RTOs, the local government might classify the

essential functions into tiers. Tiers represent blocks of time available to recover operations during an event. These are example tiers. Timeframes may vary by department or locality.

#### **Tier I: 0 to 12 Hours – Immediate**

Tier 1 functions must be restored to a minimum level of service within 12 hours to ensure continuous operation.

#### **Tier II: 12 to 72 hours – Necessary**

Tier II functions must reach an operational status within 12 to 72 hours of implementation. Tier II functions must sustain operations for a minimum of 30 days.

#### **Tier III: 72 hours to One Week – Important**

Tier III functions support Tier I and II. It is not necessary for Tier III operations to reach full operation within the first week following an event.

#### **Tier IV: One Week to 30 Days – Postponed**

Tier IV are the functions that can be postponed until all functions in Tier I, II and III are fully operational.

#### **Tier V: 30+ Days – Extended**

Tier V functions are those that can be postponed for more than 30 days, if necessary.

When placing functions into the appropriate tiers, it is important to remember that certain functions may be more essential at different times. For example, if personnel are paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and a disaster strikes on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, then payroll would not be placed within Tier I or II. However if an event occurs on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, payroll would need to be reestablished within 24 hours. For functions such as these, place them in the higher tier.

**Table 2**  
**Recovery Time Objective Matrix**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Ratings</b>	<b>RTO</b>
I	IMMEDIATE These functions involve those with the direct and immediate effect on the jurisdiction to preserve life, safety and protect property. These functions preserve the institution of government through command and control.	0 to 12 hours
II	NECESSARY	12 to 72 hours
III	IMPORTANT	72 + hours to One week
IV	POSTPONED These functions can be delayed until Tiers 1, 2 and 3 are operational.	One week to 30 days

Tier	Ratings	RTO
V	<b>EXTENDED</b> These functions can be postponed for 30 or more days.	30 days or more

Consider the operational dependence of other processes or services upon those under consideration. If a function is necessary to keep another operating, then it should have a shorter RTO. Such functions include, but are not limited to IT systems, building maintenance and human resources. **Worksheet #1** can assist in identifying and prioritizing essential functions.

### Identify Vital Records, Systems and Equipment

In COOP planning, vital records, systems and equipment are critical in carrying out essential functions. Vital records are records that, if damaged or destroyed, would disrupt operations and information flow and require replacement or re-creation at considerable expense or inconvenience. Vital records are those records that are necessary to carry out essential functions. Content, not media, determines their criticality. They are most frequently in one of three formats: paper, electronic or microfilm. Some examples of vital records include, but are not limited to:

- Personnel records;
- Operational procedures;
- Contract records;
- Insurance policies or records;
- Mutual aid agreements; and
- Executive policies.

A COOP plan includes a system of protection and recovery of vital records for both events and normal operations. Every local government should have a vital records program. For a COOP plan, it is important to assess any existing vital records program and then address any gaps. If no program exists, it is important to develop a program that provides for the effective protection, preservation and recovery of records.

There are three types of vital records:

**Static Records:** Those that change little, or not at all, over time. Examples of static records might be policies or directives.

**Active Records:** Those that change constantly with day-to-day activities or as work is completed. An example of an active record is debt management.

**Court Records:** The local government must coordinate with the local Constitutional Officer to preserve vital court records within the local circuit and district courts of Virginia. Refer to Commonwealth of Virginia Rule 1:15 for general information on circuit and district courts of Virginia.

Static, active and court records are all considered vital and should be preserved so operations can be maintained or quickly resumed following an interruption.

As with vital records, identify those systems and equipment that are required to keep essential functions operating. Keep in mind that not every system or piece of equipment is vital, even if it is important. The timing of a system's or piece of equipment's use may also determine whether it is vital or not. For example, snowplows are vital during and immediately after a blizzard, but are not vital during the summer.

It is important to consider if a system or piece of equipment is dependent upon another system or piece of equipment to be operable. For example, computer systems are dependent upon electrical supply to be operable. Therefore, resumption of power would have to occur before the computer system could be up and running. As with critical processes and services, there might also be a calendar component. For example, a disruption to the local elections system would generate a greater concern in November than any other time during the year.

**Worksheet #2** can assist in documenting the vital records, systems and equipment needed to support essential functions and the priority of these resources.

### **Inventory and Record Retention**

Inventory, protection, storage and retention of vital records should be compliant with Public Records Act § 42.1-86. The Library of Virginia has a program to inventory, schedule and microfilm official records of counties, cities and towns which it determines have permanent value and to provide safe storage for microfilm copies of such records. The Library advises and assists local officials in their programs for creating, preserving, filing and making available public records in their custody.

The State Librarian also maintains a program for the selection and preservation of public records considered essential to the operation of government and for the protection of the rights and interests of persons.

The Library of Virginia has developed a plan to ensure preservation of public records in the event of disaster or emergency. Please see Section 44-146.16 of the Public Records Act for more information. Local governments should review the records policy of the Library of Virginia and coordinate with the Library of Virginia when necessary. The personnel of the Library shall be responsible for coordinating emergency recovery operations when public records are affected.

### **Develop Safeguards for Vital Records, Systems and Equipment**

The development of a periodic review program for vital records, systems and equipment will assist in the identification of new security issues (e.g. vital record or system access or development) and in the mitigation of those issues. The program should:

- Address new security issues that have been identified;
- Identify additional vital records due to policy changes or new local government programs;
- Update information within vital records as necessary;
- Assess current protection methods for vital systems and equipment;
- Detail maintenance programs; and
- Plan for personnel training.



Establishing safeguards for vital records, systems and equipment is a key component to a successful COOP program; **Worksheet #3** can assist in detailing how vital records, systems and equipment are protected.

Finally, local governments also need to identify external contacts and vendors who provide these vital systems, equipment and services. The list should include vendors and other local agencies that are utilized by jurisdictions during day-to-day operations as well as emergencies. For example, list the company from which jurisdiction purchases computers. Additionally, if a local government department, such as IT, restores failed computer systems, list those internal contacts as well. **Worksheet #4** can assist in documenting those critical contacts.

## **Vital Records Management**

Localities should have a vital records program in place. Annex I of FCD 1 identifies effective vital records program characteristics. For more information on vital records management a locality can also contact the Library of Virginia.

## **Identify Key Personnel**

Specific staffing requirements vary widely among departments due to differences in their size, structure, mission and essential functions. Each essential function has associated key personnel who are necessary to ensure continuity of operations. Key personnel are those positions (not individuals) that carry out the department's essential functions and fulfill the department's mission. Key personnel might include not only the department head and management, but also non-management positions.

There are a couple of methods that a local government can use when identifying key personnel:

- Conduct interviews with management and personnel to gain a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities; or
- Utilize historical evidence to evaluate when past decisions or functions were hindered due to an absence of key personnel during day-to-day and emergency activities.

Once a local government has identified key personnel, it should maintain an up-to-date database or file with the following information:

- Who currently occupies the position;
- What the work requirements for the position are; and
- Which facility is the position located in.

Once key positions have been identified, the next step will be to determine the orders of succession. Orders of succession ensure that there are trained, back-up personnel to assume key positions or leadership, if departmental or local government personnel are debilitated or unavailable to execute their duties during an event. Remember that personnel who currently perform supportive functions could be available to be back ups and assist in the continuation of essential functions.

## Evaluate Current Local Governmental Organizational Chart

The first step in devising orders of succession is assessing the current local government structure. If a current local government organization chart does not already exist, prepare one by position and function. The chart may include the names of individuals in these positions, but should focus on the position. There are a couple of questions that need to be addressed when developing or evaluating the local government organization chart:

- What unique contributions does the position make to the local government's mission?
- Could this function operate effectively if the position was left vacant?

**Worksheet #5** can assist in the development of an organizational chart if one does not currently exist.

## Determine Orders of Succession

Orders of succession are provisions that are implemented when departmental or local government personnel are incapacitated or unavailable to execute their duties during an event. Departments must establish, disseminate and maintain their orders of succession by key positions. Some succession of leadership is addressed through by-laws, codes, ordinances or internal policy.

While the focus should be upon the skills, experience, knowledge and training necessary for holding a specific key position, personality, such as a particular individual's decisiveness and calmness under pressure, is also highly desirable. When establishing orders of succession, it is important to remember that succession may occur vertically, horizontally or across departments. An order of succession plan also requires sufficient depth. If possible, it is recommended that local jurisdictions identify at least **three successors** for each key position.

Skill-sets for incumbent and successor should be matched as much as possible. Any cross-training needs should be considered and addressed when the succession is defined. Examples of cross-training to be considered may include:

- Timekeeping or payroll entry training;
- Software application training;
- Equipment training; and
- Department or function - specific procedures.

**Worksheet #6** can assist local governments in designating orders of succession.

## Determine Delegations of Authority

Delegations of authority specify who is authorized to make decisions or act on behalf of key department leadership and personnel if they are away or unavailable. Delegation of authority planning involves the following steps:

- Identifying which authorities can, and should be, delegated;
- Describing the circumstances under which the delegation would be exercised, including when it would become effective and terminate;

- Identifying limitations of the delegation;
- Documenting to whom authority should be delegated; and
- Ensuring designees are trained to perform their emergency duties.

Delegations of authority are required by local ordinance or regulatory authority. For example, successors to City or County Managers are usually written in a city or county ordinance. An Assistant City Manager may only have certain authority of the City Manager when the City Manager is unable to fulfill his or her duties. Examples of authorities to be considered for delegation may include:

- Signing authority (e.g. contract approval, procurement and or approval of payment);
- Emergency procurement;
- Cash flow and debt management (e.g., monitor daily bank balances);
- Management of investments (e.g., ability to manage and review the local government's portfolio and possesses ability to send and receive wires); and
- Duties that require regulatory or statutory authority.

**Worksheet #7** can assist in identifying those authorities to be delegated during COOP plan implementation. Next, **Worksheet #8 Summary of Resource Requirements for Supporting Essential Functions** can assist in bringing together the resources needed to support essential functions such as essential personnel, external contacts, vendors, equipment, systems and RTOs.

### Select an Alternate Facility

If an event forces a work area or facility, such as 911 dispatch call center, to be evacuated, key personnel should relocate to an alternate facility. Relocation allows personnel to continue to carry out their essential functions and provide support to the public.

There are several types of alternate sites that possess different levels of capabilities.

**Hot Site** – A hot site is an alternate facility that already has in place the computer, telecommunications and environmental infrastructure necessary to recover the department's essential functions.

**Warm Site** – A warm site is an alternate work site equipped with some hardware and communication interfaces, as well as electrical and environmental conditioning that are capable of providing back-up after additional software or customization is performed or additional equipment is temporarily obtained.

**Cold Site** – A cold site is an alternate facility that has in place the environmental infrastructure necessary to recover essential functions or information systems, but does not have pre-installed computer hardware, telecommunications equipment or other necessary equipment. Arrangements for computer and telecommunications support must be made at the time of the move to the cold site.

Local governments should consider the following factors when selecting alternate work sites:

**Location** – Select a site that provides a risk-free environment and is geographically dispersed from the primary work location. This will reduce the chance that the site will be affected by the same event that required COOP plan implementation.

**Construction** – The alternate facility should be constructed so that it is relatively safe from the high-risk hazards in the area.

**Space** – The alternate facility must have enough space to house the personnel, records, systems and equipment required to support all of the department’s essential functions.

**Transportation and Area Infrastructure** – Lodging and site transportation should be available at or near the alternate facility. Sites that are accessible by public transportation and that provide lodging or are located near hotels offer important advantages.

**Communications** – The site will need to support the department’s COOP plan information technology and communication requirements. The department will need to acquire any capabilities not already in place. In many cases redundant communications facilities should be considered to reduce the impact of communication line failures

**Security** – Security measures, such as controlled access, should be an inherent part of the alternate facility.

**Power** – Access to power necessary to support equipment, facilities and HVAC. Be sure the alternate facility is on a different power grid from the primary facility.

**Life Support Measures** – Access to life support measures, food, water and other necessities should be available on-site or nearby. Consider if water can be accessed from different supply lines than those of the primary facility.

**Site Preparation Requirements** – The amount of time, effort and cost required to make the facility suitable for the department’s needs is critical.

**Maintenance** – Consider the degree of maintenance required to keep the facility ready for COOP plan operations. Lower maintenance facilities offer a distinct advantage in case of COOP plan implementation.

**Worksheet #9** can assist in establishing requirements for alternate facilities during COOP plan implementation.

Selection of alternate facilities is one of the fundamental elements of a COOP plan. However, the potential costs for ensuring that an alternate facility is available and ready when needed can be significant. The cost of a site is directly related to a function’s RTO; the shorter the RTO, the “warmer” the facility and the higher the cost. Due to the criticality of the alternate location and the possible costs associated with that site, it is important that the COOP Team provide the local government leadership and departments with a consistent set of planning assumptions for use in planning for, and assessing the viability of, alternate facilities.

To alleviate the high costs associated with selecting an alternate location, the following considerations should be made:

- Ensure that only key personnel relocate and only essential functions are performed at the alternate facility;

- Consider virtual office options such as telecommuting and video teleconferencing;
- Pool the resources of several departments to acquire space for an alternate location;
- Co-locate with another department, but each would have individually-designated space to meet its alternate facility needs;
- Establish memorandums of understanding (MOU) or mutual aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions or agencies for an alternate facility; and
- Establish pre-position contracts if a lease is required for an alternate facility.

When considering alternate facility locations gauge the geographic impact of the event and use the following guidelines:

- Building-specific Event: Within 5 miles of primary location
- Local Event: Within 5 miles to 30 miles of primary location
- Widespread Event: Within 30 miles to 60 miles of primary location

It is important to identify at least two alternate facility locations. One location should be close to current operations for incidents that affect a single building or facility. One location should be further away – between 5 miles to 30 miles – so if the event is larger and affects a larger population and multiple facilities, the alternate facility will be out of harms way. It also is important to consider whether these locations have alternate power sources, water systems and other important utilities.

**Worksheet #10** can assist in identifying alternate facility options for a local government.

## **Interoperable Communications**

Interoperable communications, or the ability for department personnel to communicate with individuals internally and externally, is critical during events and supports key personnel performing essential functions.

In accordance with the National Communications System's (NCS) Directive 3-10, NCS Manual 3-10-1, and other established communications requirements, a locality must:

- Implement minimum communications requirements for its HQs and its alternate and other continuity facilities, as appropriate, which support the continuation of that locality's essential functions;
- Possess interoperable and available communications capabilities in sufficient quantity and mode/media, that are commensurate with that locality's responsibilities during conditions of an emergency;
- Possess communications capabilities that can support the locality's senior leadership while they are in transit to alternate facilities;
- Ensure that the communications capabilities required by this Directive are maintained and readily available for a period of sustained usage of no less than 30 days or until normal operations can be reestablished, and that all continuity staff are properly trained, as appropriate, in the use of these communications capabilities;

- Satisfy the requirement to provide assured and priority access to communications resources; and
- Have sufficient communications capabilities to accomplish the locality's essential functions from an alternate facility. If the locality's alternate facility is shared with another locality, also have a signed agreement with that locality which ensures that each has adequate access to communications resources.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

Internal and external communications systems used to communicate with emergency and non-emergency personnel, media, other external agencies and local governments during COOP events include:

- Commercial telephone;
- Landline telephone (voice or fax) system;
- Cellular telephone network;
- E-mail and text messaging (pager, cellular telephones, PDAs);
- Pagers;
- Alert and notification systems;
- Sirens;
- National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) 800 MHz public safety and critical infrastructure channels (or other region-specific mutual aid channels);
- Satellite telephones; and
- Web-based communications.

The local government should provide for redundancy of communication methods in the event that one or more communication systems are not operational. A local government should have operational communications systems at the alternate facility such as:

- Commercial telephone;
- Land line telephone (voice or fax) system;
- Cellular telephone network;
- E-mail;
- NPSPAC 800 MHz public safety, critical infrastructure, private business and commercial systems or channels (or other region-specific mutual aid channels); and
- Satellite telephones.

Access to critical information systems utilized for essential functions during normal operations must be available at the alternate location. In order for these systems to be accessible,

connectivity must be in place at the alternate location and system servers should be backed up on a daily basis at both the primary and alternate location.

Departments within each local government have various needs and capabilities regarding communications; therefore, each department's communication plan should be developed and addressed in its departmental COOP plan. **Worksheet #11** can assist in identifying the communications systems currently in place and the alternate providers to these critical systems.

## **Communications Plan**

Communication is one of the most critical capabilities during any event. The ability to communicate internally, within the organization and externally, to first responders, stakeholders, media and the public is crucial. The EOP typically details external communication plans due to its focus on initial response to an emergency and interaction with first responders. COOP planning is an opportunity to review existing plans and ensure their effectiveness. External communications is addressed below. Developing a Rapid Recall List or call tree for internal communications is addressed on page 38 of the manual.

## **External Communications**

Outreach and communications are an integral part of any event that disrupts essential functions of a jurisdiction. Most jurisdictions have external communication or public information plans. While developing the COOP plan, it is a good time to review any communication plans the jurisdiction has and ensure they meet the needs of all types of events.

The plan may include:

- Media outlets and contacts;
- Methods of communication such as press releases, text message alerts, reverse call, voice-message sirens and building alert systems;
- Designated spokespersons;
- Pre-scripted press releases; and
- Lists of subject matter experts who could be called upon to address certain types of events.

The media can serve as a critical resource and an important tool for a local jurisdiction during an emergency. Media outlets will disseminate warning messages and special news advisories provided by local government to personnel and the general public. Conducting regular media briefings during an event ensures that the media has the most accurate and up-to-date information.

As the COOP plan is being developed, an opportunity exists to gain an understanding of the jurisdiction's communications plan. Local governments should include the Public Information Officer (PIO) in the COOP planning effort to ensure that departments have an understanding of where to direct media calls, who serves as spokespersons, what communications methods can be used for alert and notification and what role, if any, do individual departments have with public information during COOP plan execution.

## **Public Information Officer**

The PIO has the following responsibilities when directing the local government's communication plan and media relations:

- Coordinating and integrating public information functions across jurisdictions and functional agencies, as required;
- Developing standard operating procedures on the actual use of the Joint Information Center (JIC) and the equipment and personnel that may be needed.
- Developing accurate and complete information on the incident for both internal and external consumption;
- Coordinating the overall emergency public information efforts of the local government;
- Conducting public education programs as an ongoing activity;
- Developing and disseminating public information materials and maintaining a stock of materials for emergency use based on hazards likely to confront the jurisdiction;
- Periodically briefing the media on local warning systems and warning procedures;
- Maintaining a media contact roster; and
- Providing authorized news releases to the media while keeping senior management informed of message content.

## **Human Capital Management**

Human capital management is the process of acquiring, optimizing and retaining the best talent by implementing processes and systems matched to the local government's underlying mission.

During COOP plan implementation, a local government might need to perform with reduced personnel. Human capital management is critical in ensuring the flexibility required of key personnel during times of crisis. Local governments should ensure that key personnel are adequately trained and cross-trained to enable the performance of all essential functions.

During an event, personnel need to focus on maintaining essential functions. This focus will be disrupted if the personnel are also concerned about their families' safety and security. Personnel and their families appreciate knowing the local government is concerned for their safety; therefore, leaders should encourage all personnel to plan for their families' well being before a disaster strikes.

The COOP program should include:

- An emergency call-in number for personnel to gather information regarding the local governments operations, type of emergency, pay;
- Guidance and assistance to personnel and their families; and
- Guidance regarding establishment of family go-kits. Family go-kits should include, but are not limited to the following:
  - NOAA weather radio;
  - Water;



- Non-perishable food;
- First Aid kit;
- Flashlight and batteries; and
- Prescriptions.
- Visit the following links for additional information on preparing family go-kits:
- [www.readyvirginia.gov](http://www.readyvirginia.gov)
- [www.VAEmergency.com](http://www.VAEmergency.com);
- [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov);
- [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org);
- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov); and
- [www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids).

It is important to ensure that human resource policies support the overall COOP program. Local government's senior leadership and the COOP Team should review policies and procedures to ensure they allow for flexibility during COOP plan implementation. The COOP Team provides direction to local government administration to address human resource issues. These issues include:

- Leave policies;
- Cross-training;
- Contingency staffing plans (internal and external);
- Transportation;
- Employee communication programs and accountability;
- Telecommuting;
- Workers Compensation;
- Family support planning;
- Counseling; and
- Family shelter.

The issue of guiding and monitoring volunteers might arise after an event, before COOP plan implementation. Managing volunteers, including those who respond independently to the emergency, should be considered.

FCD 1 outlines six areas of human capital management that a COOP Plan must address:

1. Develop and implement a process to identify, document communicate with and train key personnel.
2. Provide guidance to continuity personnel on individual preparedness measures they should take to ensure response to a continuity event.

3. Implement a process to communicate the agency's operating status to all staff.
4. Implement a process to contact and account for all staff in the event of an emergency.
5. Identify a human capital liaison from the agency's human resources staff to work the COOP Coordinator when developing the agency's emergency plans.
6. Implement a process to communicate their human capital guidance for emergencies (pay, leave, staffing and other human resources flexibilities) to continue essential functions during an emergency.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated at the state level but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

## PHASE III – DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Design and Development Phase of the COOP planning process includes development of the actual COOP plan document and entry of necessary data into the COOP template.

In this phase, the COOP Team will identify those areas that need to be addressed in the Basic Plan and the department plans. The Basic Plan addresses the overarching COOP program for the jurisdiction while department plans specifically document COOP operational procedures for each department. Department plans could be included as appendices to the Basic Plan.

Depending on which template is used, a COOP plan might include some, but not all of, the following sections:

- **Cover Page** – Identifies that the COOP plan is a confidential document and not subject to public review. Include the following statement: “Not subject to FOIA under Virginia Code 2.2-3705.2;”
- **Privacy Statement** – Describes the sensitive nature of the document and refers any request of the document to the appropriate legal counsel;
- **Record of Changes** – Records all the revisions and updates to a COOP plan;
- **Executive Summary** – Briefly outlines content of the COOP plan and describes what it is, whom it affects and the circumstances under which it should be executed. Further, it discusses the key elements of COOP planning and explains the locality’s or department’s implementation strategies;
- **Introduction** – Explains the importance of COOP planning to the local government. It also discusses the background for planning, referencing recent events that have led to the increased emphasis on the importance of a COOP capability for the organization;
- **Purpose** – Explains why the local government is developing a COOP plan. It briefly discusses applicable state and federal guidance and explains the overall purpose of COOP planning, which is to ensure the continuity of essential functions.
- **Scope** – Describes the applicability of the plan to the local government as a whole, the primary and satellite facilities and personnel. Ideally, the scope of a COOP plan addresses the full spectrum of potential threats, crises and events (natural as well as man-made);
- **Authorities and References** – Lists local, state and federal references regarding COOP planning that have assisted in the development of the COOP plan;
- **Concept of Operations** – Explains how the local government will implement its COOP plan and how it plans to address each critical COOP element;
- **Essential Functions** – Addresses the functions that must continue with no, or minimal, disruptions (see page 12 in the manual for more information);
- **Planning Scenarios and Planning Assumptions** – Identifies and defines the planning objectives and considerations that need to be developed by the COOP Team during program initiation;
- **COOP Plan Implementation** - Outlines the executive decision process, levels of emergency and checklists that are utilized during COOP plan implementation (see page 35 in the manual for more information);

- **Loss of Access to a Facility** – Addresses the procedures a jurisdiction will follow to continue essential functions when there is a loss of access to a facility;
- **Loss of Services Due to a Reduction in Workforce** - Addresses the procedures a department will follow to continue essential functions when there is a loss of services due to a reduction in workforce;
- **Loss of Services Due to Equipment or System Failure** - Addresses the procedures a department will follow to continue essential functions when there is a loss of services due to equipment or system failure;
- **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities** - Identifies key positions within the local government and their responsibilities in the event of an emergency requiring COOP plan implementation. It also addresses contact information for internal and external contacts;
- **COOP Teams** – Identifies personnel who coordinate the implementation and maintenance of the overarching COOP program for the local government and its departments (see page 9 in the manual for more information);
- **Alternate Facilities** – Lists the facilities that have been identified by organizations to provide continuation of essential functions if the primary facility is unavailable (see page 19 in this manual for more information);
- **Alert and Notification** – Describes the protocols and procedures that are in place to alert personnel during an event (see page 38 of the manual for more information);
- **Orders of Succession and Delegations of Authority** – Lists successors for key personnel and defines authority that may be delegated to successors and other key personnel (see page 18 in the manual for more information);
- **Vital Records, Systems and Equipment** – Identifies the policies established by a local government regarding records, software, systems and equipment required to support essential functions at the primary and alternate facility (see page 15 in the manual for more information);
- **Interoperable Communications** – Describes the internal and external communications systems used to communicate with emergency and non-emergency personnel, media, other external agencies and local governments during COOP events (see page 21 in the manual for more information);
- **COOP Administration and Support** – Identifies key personnel within the department and their responsibilities in the administration and maintenance of the COOP plan;
- **Multi-Year Strategy and Program Management** - Describes the overall management of the COOP program. It includes the names of the members of the COOP Team. It details their roles and responsibilities;
- **COOP Plan Maintenance** – Details the activities associated with maintaining the COOP plan (see page 46 of the manual for more information); and
- **Acronyms and Definitions** – Defines key words, phrases and acronyms used throughout the plan and any terms generally associated with continuity planning (see page 49 in this manual for more information).

The COOP plan might have several appendices, depending on jurisdiction-specific needs. For example, there might be appendices addressing:

- Pandemic Influenza Planning;
- Essential Functions;
- COOP Team Roster;
- Requirements for Alternate Facility Locations;
- Orders of Succession;
- Delegations of Authority;
- Vital Records, Systems and Equipment; and
- Communications.

## **PHASE IV – PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION**

During the Publication and Dissemination Phase, the COOP plan is put into effect. This requires publishing and distributing the plan to senior leadership and any other appropriate personnel. It also includes educating all personnel on their roles and responsibilities during COOP plan implementation. After initial dissemination and training, the COOP plan should become a part of day-to-day activities. Even though the COOP plan is intended to become a part of daily activities, refer any requests for a copy of the COOP plan to the local government's attorney.

## **PHASE V – TRAINING, TESTING AND EXERCISES**

The Training, Testing and Exercises Phase consist of the following:

- Assessing and validating the COOP plan, policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that local government personnel are familiar with COOP procedures; and
- Ensuring that key personnel are sufficiently trained to carry out essential functions during COOP plan implementation.

The training, testing and exercise program will ensure that personnel are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the execution of the COOP plan. Jurisdictions should make every attempt to undertake joint initiatives for developing and conducting exercises by participating in multi-department COOP exercises and coordinating with other emergency management teams. This will increase the awareness of available resources, develop relationships with other departments and involve the creation of working groups and committees.

Regularly scheduled exercises are critical to ensuring that the COOP plan can be executed in times of an emergency. Exercising is one of the most effective ways to discover and document necessary modifications. Exercising the COOP plan also will help institutionalize the process for personnel. Personnel who are confident in their ability to implement the plan will be more effective when the time comes to make the COOP plan work during a real event.

A testing and exercise program should be progressive in nature, building from simple, individual tasks to complex, multi-local government interactions. The program should contain activities that include building upon existing training and improving capabilities through a series of tests and exercises.

### **Training**

After the COOP plan is developed, all personnel involved in COOP activities should be trained and equipped to perform their emergency duties. Cross-training team members and key positions ensures that the local government is prepared to meet the unusual demands that may arise when essential functions are performed in an emergency situation.

An effective COOP training program includes:

- Individual and team training to ensure currency of knowledge and integration of skills necessary to carry out essential functions;
- Refresher training for key personnel as they arrive at the alternate facility location; and
- Training courses and materials designed to improve knowledge and skills related to carrying out COOP responsibilities.

Local governments can utilize FEMA's Independent Study Program particularly, Courses IS – 546 and IS – 547 to provide personnel with basic COOP concepts.

According to FCD 1, a COOP training program must include:

1. Annual continuity awareness briefings (or other means of orientation) for the entire workforce.

2. Annual training for personnel (including host or contractor personnel) who are assigned to activate, support, and sustain continuity operations.
3. Annual training for the locality's leadership on that locality's essential functions including training on their continuity responsibilities.
4. Annual training for all locality personnel who assume the authority and responsibility of the locality's leadership if that leadership is incapacitated or becomes otherwise unavailable during a continuity situation.
5. Annual training for all predelegated authorities for making policy determinations and other decisions, at the headquarters, field, satellite, and other organizational levels, as appropriate.
6. Personnel briefings on locality continuity plans that involve using, or relocating to alternate facilities, existing facilities, or virtual offices.
7. Annual training on the capabilities of communications and information technology (IT) systems to be used during a continuity event.
8. Annual training regarding identification, protection, and ready availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, information systems, and data management software and equipment (including classified and other sensitive data) needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation.
9. Annual training for all reconstitution plans and procedures to resume normal locality operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

### **National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) Training**

NIMS provides a consistent, flexible and adjustable national framework that jurisdictions of all sizes can use to manage events, regardless of their cause, size, location or complexity. The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated response structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

Currently, there are no COOP-specific requirements for training personnel in ICS or NIMS; however, local governments should ensure that all COOP-related activities supporting or within the EOC in any emergency operations capacity, will meet NIMS implementation measures established by the NIMS Integration Center. Please refer to the following link to view the NIMS Implementation Activities Schedule:

[http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims\\_imp\\_act.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_imp_act.pdf)



In the table below, indicate the number of personnel who have completed the courses listed (from the personnel identified for supporting EOC, response and recovery activities).

**Table 3**  
**Personnel with NIMS Training and ICS**

	Entry-level First Responders (Unit or Task Force Leader)	First Line Supervisors (Division or Group Supervisor)	Emergency Management and Response Personnel in Middle Management (Section Chiefs and Branch Director)	Emergency Management and Response Personnel in Command and General Personnel (Incident Command & Command Personnel)	Personnel Trained as ICS Trainers
IS-700	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
IS-800			[ ]	[ ]	
ICS-100	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
ICS-200	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
ICS-300			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
ICS-400				[ ]	[ ]

\*[Gray boxes are not applicable]

### Safety Training

Local governments might want to incorporate their existing health and safety or loss prevention program into the COOP program, where appropriate. The health and safety plan should establish U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliant safety strategies and implementation plans for the local government during COOP plan implementation.

Safety training should provide select personnel and emergency workers with information on how to identify hazardous conditions and specific guidelines on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The Safety Training Schedule includes, but is not limited to:

- Heavy Equipment Safety;
- Physical Hazards;
- Chemical Safety;
- Blood-borne Pathogens;
- PPE;

- Fire Emergency; and
- Electrical Hazards.

### **Testing and Exercise Program**

Testing is an evaluation of a capability against an established and measurable standard. Tests are conducted to evaluate capabilities, not personnel. By testing, local government personnel can determine if the policies and procedures work as they should, when they should. It is recommended that testing histories and ongoing testing plans be documented. This will help maintain skill currency and the ability to close any noted skill gaps. Testing results should be published and identified gaps should be actively tracked and managed. A documented schedule should be published and kept current. Standard testing templates should be developed. Testing should include the following:

- Alert, notification and activation procedures;
- Communication systems;
- Vital records and databases;
- Information technology systems;
- Major systems at the alternate facility; and
- Reconstitution procedures.

Testing COOP capabilities is essential to demonstrating and improving the ability of local governments to execute their COOP plan. Tests validate, or identify for correction, specific aspects of COOP plans. Periodic testing also helps ensure that equipment and procedures are maintained in a constant state of readiness.

**Drills or System Tests** are coordinated and supervised activities normally used to exercise a single, specific operation, function or system. They evaluate response time or performance against recovery time objectives, provide training with new equipment or procedures or enable practice using current skills.

According to FCD 1, a COOP test program must include:

1. Annual testing of alert, notification, and activation procedures for continuity personnel, and quarterly testing of such procedures for continuity personnel at department headquarters..
2. Annual testing of plans for recovering vital records (both classified and unclassified), critical information systems, services, and data.
3. Annual testing of primary and backup infrastructure systems and services (e.g., power, water, fuel) at alternate facilities.
4. Annual testing and exercising of required physical security capabilities at alternate facilities.
5. Testing and validating equipment to ensure the internal and external interoperability and viability of communications systems, through monthly testing of the continuity communications capabilities (e.g., secure and nonsecure voice and data communications).
6. Annual testing of the capabilities required to perform a locality's essential functions.

7. A process for formally documenting and reporting tests and their results.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

Exercises are conducted to validate elements of the COOP plan, both individually and collectively. Exercises should be realistic simulations of an emergency, during which individuals and departments perform the tasks that are expected of them in a real event. Exercises should promote preparedness; improve the response capability of individuals and the local government; validate plans, policies, procedures and systems; and verify the effectiveness of command, control and communication functions. Exercises may vary in size and complexity to achieve different objectives. The various types of exercises are described below:

- **Tabletop Exercises** simulate an implementation of the COOP plan in an informal, stress-free environment. They are designed to prompt constructive discussion as participants examine and resolve problems based on existing plans. There is no equipment utilization, resource deployment or time pressure. The exercise's success depends on the group identifying problem areas and offering constructive resolution alternatives. This format exposes personnel to new or unfamiliar concepts, plans, policies and procedures;
- **Functional Exercises** are interactive exercises performed in real time that test the capability of the local government to respond to a simulated emergency. They test one or more functions and focus on procedures, roles and responsibilities before, during or after an emergency event; and
- **Full-scale Exercises** simulate emergency conditions through field exercises designed to evaluate the execution of the local government's COOP plan in a highly stressful environment. This realism is accomplished through mobilization of local government personnel, equipment and resources.

According to FCD 1, a COOP exercise program must include:

1. Compliance with the DHS-mandated National Exercise Program (NEP), as appropriate.
2. An annual opportunity for continuity personnel to demonstrate their familiarity with continuity plans and procedures and to demonstrate the agency's capability to continue its essential functions.
3. An annual exercise that incorporates the deliberate and preplanned movement of continuity personnel to an alternate facility or location.
4. An opportunity to demonstrate intra- and interdepartment communications capabilities.
5. An opportunity to demonstrate that backup data and records required to support essential functions at alternate facilities or locations are sufficient, complete, and current.
6. An opportunity for continuity personnel to demonstrate their familiarity with the reconstitution procedures to transition from a continuity environment to normal activities when appropriate.
7. A comprehensive debriefing or hotwash after each exercise, which allows participants to identify systemic weakness in plans and procedures and to recommend revisions to the agency's continuity plan.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

## Testing and Exercise Schedule

It is recommended that testing and exercise plans provide for the following elements:

- Testing annually of internal personnel to ensure the ability to perform essential functions;
- Testing quarterly of alert and notification procedures and systems for any type of event;
- Testing quarterly of communication capabilities; and
- Multiple departments or jurisdictions exercising, where applicable and feasible.

Tabletop exercises can be conducted quarterly, if deemed necessary. Cost and time related to executing a tabletop is minimal. Functional exercises should be conducted on an annual basis. Full-scale exercises are costly and time consuming, so it is recommended that a local government develop and implement a full-scale exercise on a bi-annual basis. If jurisdictions have an up-to-date EMAP testing and exercise schedule; you can utilize that schedule and insert appropriate COOP plan testing and exercises.

**Table 4**  
**Sample COOP Testing, Training and Exercise Schedule**

Type	Participants	Frequency	Location
Drill	Successors	Quarterly	Training Room or Alternate Facility
Tabletop	Senior Management	Annually	Training Room or Alternate Facility
Full-Scale	Key Personnel	Annually or Bi-annually	Alternate Facility
Tabletop	Key Personnel Successors	Annually	Training Room or Alternate Facility
Tabletop	Executive Leadership Senior Management Supervisors	Annually	Training Room or Alternate Facility

## After Action Report

Each exercise activity, as well as actual events, should be evaluated and the results incorporated into a formal corrective action process. The results are used as performance measurements to rate overall effectiveness of the COOP program.

The evaluation of the exercise or actual event identifies systemic weaknesses and suggests corrective actions that will enhance local government preparedness. Following the exercise or actual event, a comprehensive debriefing and After Action Report (AAR) should be completed. All data collected is incorporated into an improvement plan that provides input for annual COOP plan revisions. For example, if a fire forces a department to relocate and the alternate site does not have the necessary systems to support that department, then the COOP plan should be revised with an alternate site that can accommodate the department.

Recommendations for changes to the COOP plan should be developed and incorporated into the COOP annual review process. Immediately following an exercise or actual event, recommendations that affect the alert and notification process, COOP plan activation process, COOP plan implementation, or operational issues with the mobilization process should be developed and incorporated into the COOP plan. All exercises conducted with federal funding must comply with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), [www.hseep.dhs.gov](http://www.hseep.dhs.gov). AAR or Improvement Plans (IPs) created for exercises must conform to the templates provided in HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning. A sample non-HSEEP AAR can be accessed on VDEM's Web site at [www.vaemergency.com](http://www.vaemergency.com)

## **PHASE VI – COOP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

After a disruption to essential functions occurs, the period of “COOP Plan Implementation” begins with three stages: Activation and Relocation, Alternate Facility Operations and Reconstitution. Activation is when all or a portion of the plan has been put into motion and procedures are followed for alert and notification. Relocation is the actual movement of an agency or department to an alternate site. Reconstitution focuses on restoring business operations to their normal state of affairs. The COOP plan implementation phase consists of the following:

- Activation and Relocation
  - Activation
    - Level of Emergency
    - Alert and Notification
  - Relocation
    - Interim Processes
    - Devolution
- Alternate Facility Operations
  - Go-Kits
  - Reception and In-processing
  - Personnel Accountability
- Reconstitution
  - Reconstitution Process
  - Implementation of Reconstitution Plan
  - Reconstitution Manager
- Checklist

### **Activation and Relocation**

#### **Activation**

Many situations might occur that require activation of a COOP plan, or portions of a plan. An event that impacts the entire jurisdiction, a single building or a department that occupies a building could force COOP plan execution. Two types of activation exist:

- Activation with relocation; and
- Activation without relocation.

Activation with relocation is triggered by any unsafe conditions at the department’s primary location, or infrastructure issues such as loss of utilities or network connectivity for an extended duration, which would make the facility unusable. Activation without relocation can be triggered by personnel issues, such as pandemic influenza, or an enterprise-wide IT outage. If

relocation is necessary, initiating the department’s alternate facility location activities also would occur during this phase.

### **COOP Plan Activation: With or Without Warning during Duty or Non-Duty Hours**

The COOP plan is activated based on known or anticipated threats and emergencies that may occur with or without warning. The general assumptions for activating the COOP plan with or without warning are described below.

- **Known threats and events (with warning):** There are some threats to operations that might afford advance warning, permitting the orderly alert, notification, evacuation and, if necessary, the relocation of personnel. Situations that might provide such warning include a hurricane, a transportation accident resulting in a threat of a release of a hazardous material (HAZMAT) or a threat of a terrorist incident.
- **Unanticipated threats and events (no warning) during non-duty hours:** Events might not be preceded by warning (e.g., earthquakes, arson, HAZMAT, or terrorist incidents) and might occur while the majority of personnel are not at work. In these circumstances, while operations from the primary facilities might be impossible, the majority of the department’s personnel are able to respond to instructions, including the requirement to relocate following proper notification.
- **Unanticipated threats and events (no warning) during duty hours:** Events might also occur with no warning during normal office hours. In these circumstances, implementation of the COOP plan, if indicated by the circumstances of the event, would begin after execution of the emergency response or operations plan to support notification, evacuation and situation assessment.

### **Level of Emergency and Executive Decision Process**

A COOP plan can be activated in part or in whole depending upon the disruption or threat. An event may force personnel to evacuate a single facility for a day or two, which might require executing only the communications component of the COOP plan and IT recovery of data and systems. On the other hand, a department’s offices could be destroyed during the business day, which would require full execution of a COOP plan including evacuation and pre-planned movement of key personnel to an alternate facility location that can sustain essential functions for up to 30 days.

An effective COOP plan outlines an executive decision process for the quick and accurate assessment of the situation and determination of the best course of action for response and recovery. It helps to develop a decision matrix or flow chart that ties the jurisdiction’s reaction to the level of emergency. There is no standardized classification for emergencies, but the following model may be useful. The matrix below can be modified to reflect a local government’s EOP levels of emergency.

**Table 5**  
**Level of Emergency and Decision Matrix**

Level of Emergency	Category	Impact on Local government	Decisions
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Level of Emergency	Category	Impact on Local government	Decisions
I	Alert	An actual or anticipated event might have an adverse impact of up to 12 hours on any portion of the local government but does not require any specific response beyond what is normally available.	Impacted department alerts appropriate personnel of situation and requests needed assistance. No COOP plan implementation required.
II	Stand-by	An actual or anticipated event estimated to have minimal impact on operations for 12 to 72 hours that might require assistance beyond what is normally available.	Impacted department alerts appropriate personnel. Members of the COOP Team are notified and placed on stand-by. Limited COOP plan implementation depending on individual department requirements.
III	Partial Implementation	An actual event estimated to disrupt the operations of one or more essential functions or impact vital systems for more than three days.	Impacted department alerts elected officials and senior leadership. COOP Team members alerted and instructed on the full or partial implementation of the COOP plan. Implementation of the COOP plan approved by the elected officials or senior leadership. Might require the mobilization of all resources. Might also require the activation of orders of succession. Might require the movement of some personnel to an alternate facility location for a period of more than 3 days but less than 14 days. Event requires



Level of Emergency	Category	Impact on Local government	Decisions
			command and control resources be applied to the issue.
IV	Full Implementation	An actual event that significantly disrupts the operations of three or more essential functions or to the full department that impacts multiple vital systems for more than seven days.	Impacted department alerts elected officials and senior leadership. COOP Team members alerted and instructed on the full or partial implementation of the COOP plan. Might require activation of orders of succession. Might require the movement of significant number of personnel to an alternate location for a period of more than 14 days. Event requires command and control resources be applied to the issue, and might require the complete mobilization of all resources.

## Alert and Notification

The local government must establish specific procedures to alert and notify personnel of emergency situations including building evacuation required by immediate danger, as well as impending events that have been forecast.

Likewise, notifying personnel off-hours may be necessary, in which case automated dialers, call trees, e-mail alerts, text messaging or other techniques should be developed during COOP planning. Especially important is the ability to actively “push” messages and timely information to personnel. Communication planning is a crucial part of building an effective COOP capability. Alert and notification procedures should be in place to ensure an efficient and effective activation process.

## Rapid Recall List

The Rapid Recall List is a short document with a cascade call list and other critical telephone numbers. The cascade list should include the COOP Team, key personnel, and emergency personnel, both inside and outside the local jurisdiction. The POC will activate the list and

initiate contact with the local elected official and the COOP Team. **Worksheet #12** can assist in creating a Rapid Recall List if one has not already been developed.

## **Relocation**

Relocation is the actual movement of essential functions, personnel, records and equipment to the alternate facility. Relocation might also involve:

- Transferring communications capability to an alternate facility;
- Ordering supplies and equipment that are not already in place at the alternate facility; and
- Other planned activities, such as providing network access.

## **Interim Processes**

Interim processes are temporary workarounds that can restore some level of functionality until the resources normally supporting essential functions are recovered. Interim processes are frequently manual ones (e.g. manually developing purchase orders and payroll with the use of typewriters, pens, paper or another method) that are performed after an interruption of critical IT systems or networks. They may not be effective alternatives for a long period of time, but can provide extra time for recovery of supporting resources without suffering a complete outage. Other alternatives may be mutual aid agreements with other local governments using the same systems. Interim processes can be developed within current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) to ensure essential functions continue.

## **Devolution**

Devolution is the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from a department's primary operating personnel and facilities to another department. It is also the ability to sustain that operational capability for an extended period, which is called "fail over." Devolution supports overall COOP planning and addresses catastrophic or other disasters that render a government's leadership and personnel unavailable or incapable of performing their essential functions from either the primary or alternate facilities.

Federal agencies are required to include devolution procedures within their COOP plans; however, devolution is currently not a requirement of local government COOP plans. (This section is included for information purposes only. Devolution is not included within the basic and department plan templates).

## **Alternate Facility Operations**

Activation of a local government's alternate facilities takes place from 0 to 12 hours and may last up to 30 days. Issues to address during this phase include:

- Providing minimum standards for communication and direction and control to be maintained until the alternate facility is operational;
- Activating plans, policies and procedures, transfer activities, essential functions, personnel, records and equipment;
- Securing the primary facility, equipment and vital records;

- Assigning roles and responsibilities to key personnel;
- Establishing internal and external communication structures;
- Accounting for personnel, including supportive personnel; and
- Developing plans and schedules for reconstitution.

In events affecting multiple departments, alternate location facility resource conflicts may arise. Examples include the services of a shared infrastructure service such as IT resources or if two departments have planned to use the same facility as their alternate location. Day-to-day operations will continue in the alternate facilities until the Reconstitution Phase has been completed.

### **Go-Kits**

Go-Kits are pre-packaged, up-to-date kits containing equipment, reference material and personal and logistical support items needed to perform essential functions. Even with a well-equipped alternate location, go-kits help transfer critical information and equipment.

The contents of the department go-kits should be updated monthly to keep information and materials current.

### **Professional Go-Kit**

Professional Go-Kits should contain operating procedures, emergency plans, operating regulations and other relevant guidance that is not pre-positioned at an alternate facility location. Other documents that might be included in the Go-Kit are:

- COOP plan;
- Current contact lists for personnel and external parties;
- Formatted computer diskettes, CD-ROMs or memory sticks;
- General office supplies (small amount);
- In-processing packet;
- Cellular telephone, Blackberry, Nextel, PDA device;
- Current equipment report;
- Current software report; and
- Current vital records, files and database report.

Designated essential personnel should carry their professional go-kits to the alternate location.

### **Reception and In-processing**

The COOP plan must establish a reception area and in-processing procedures for deployed personnel. Personnel must know where to go to check-in and receive assignment to their workspaces.

Arriving personnel also may need information about hotels, restaurants, laundry facilities and medical treatment facilities. In-processing packets should be prepared in advance of COOP plan

activation and provided to personnel for inclusion in their go-kits. The packets should include information, such as:

- Hours of operation;
- Anticipated duration of the relocation, if known;
- Safety and security measures; and
- The information line telephone number.

### **Personnel Accountability**

Personnel accountability describes a process or procedure for identifying personnel whereabouts. COOP plan procedures must provide for accountability of deployed and supportive personnel. Accountability is critical to ensure that:

- All personnel are safe;
- Key personnel have arrived at the alternate site; and
- Additional support can be identified quickly, if necessary.

### **Reconstitution**

Reconstitution focuses on restoring business operations to their normal state of affairs. This phase is initiated once the emergency is over and is unlikely to cause additional disruptions. Basic planning for reconstitution should be done concurrently with COOP planning. Event-specific reconstitution planning should begin after the COOP plan is activated and the situation has been adequately assessed.

### **Reconstitution Process**

After receiving approval from law enforcement and emergency services, the jurisdiction should begin salvage operations and planning for one of the following reconstitution options:

- Remaining at the relocation site because it now becomes the new primary site;
- Moving from the relocation facility back to the original site;
- Moving to a new primary site if the original is unusable; or
- Moving to a temporary site while the original is rehabilitated or a new facility constructed.

### **Implementation of Reconstitution Plan**

Once the emergency-specific Reconstitution Plan is developed, departments need to inform all personnel of the plan, its implementation schedule and specific task assignments. Executing the Reconstitution Plan results in the transfer of personnel, supplies, equipment and essential functions from the relocation site if necessary, or establishes it as the new primary site. If needed, ensure all stakeholders, e.g., vendors, customers and regulatory bodies are notified.

## Reconstitution Manager

Because reconstitution can be very complex, many jurisdictions will designate a Reconstitution Manager whose job it is to focus solely on reconstitution issues. Typically the manager will not have primary response duties to allow them to focus on COOP recovery activities. A Reconstitution Manager is responsible for the following:

- Forming a reconstitution team;
- Developing space allocation and facility requirements;
- Coordinating with appropriate agencies and organizations to find suitable space, if the primary facility is not usable;
- Developing a time-phased plan and listing functions and projects in order of priority for resuming normal operations; and
- Ensuring the building is structurally safe and that it meets all local occupancy codes.

## COOP Plan Implementation Procedures Checklist

The purpose of these checklists is to outline the actions to be performed during an event affecting the department or the entire jurisdiction. These checklists are utilized when the COOP plan has been implemented, if the main facility is unavailable, or as directed by the head of the department, or the elected or appointed official. These checklists should be included in the normal plan review and maintenance process and should be modified to fit the unique processes and procedures of the jurisdiction. **Worksheet #13** can assist in modifying departmental procedures of the jurisdiction. The department plan template will assist the jurisdiction in developing operational procedures for COOP plan implementation that can serve as the basis for checklists.

Two important tasks that the jurisdiction should focus on during the entire event are:

- Ensuring safety and security of the personnel and facility at all times; and
- Ensuring personnel are regularly briefed on the status of the event.

**Table 6**  
**Sample COOP Plan Implementation Procedures Checklist**

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
<b>Activation and Relocation</b>			
1	Receive notification of event		
2	If necessary, conduct evacuation		
3	Conduct a headcount of personnel		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
4	If necessary, contact Emergency Responders (fire, police, EMS)		
5	Ensure that safety measures are put into effect		
6	Contact the Building Maintenance Department for shutting down utilities to limit further damage		
7	If needed, invoke succession of leadership		
8	Initiate personnel notification using Rapid Recall List		
9	Activate the department's Continuity of Operations Plan		
10	Hold department's response meeting at predetermined site		
11	Assemble supporting elements required for re-establishing and performing essential functions at alternate facility location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vital files, records and databases</li> <li>■ Critical software</li> <li>■ Critical equipment</li> </ul>		
12	Assemble remaining documents required for performance of all other essential functions to be performed at the alternate location		
13	Initiate external communication for applicable external contacts		
14	Prepare designated communications and other equipment for relocation		
15	Take appropriate preventive measures to protect other communications and equipment that will not be relocated		
16	Make computer connectivity and telephone line transfers to designated alternate location		
17	Ensure drive-away kits are complete and ready for transfer		
18	Key personnel begin movement to alternate facility location		
19	If required, provide support to local Emergency		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
	Operations Center		
20	Develop detailed status of situation for senior leadership		
21	Notify remaining personnel and appropriate departments for movement to alternate facility location		
<b>Alternate Facility Operations</b>			
22	Notify other local departments, customers, state and surrounding jurisdictions that operations have shifted to alternate facility location		
23	Organize personnel and account for supportive personnel		
24	Develop shift rotations		
25	Determine which essential functions have been affected		
26	Develop status report		
27	Prioritize essential functions for restoration		
28	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
29	Administrative actions to assemble: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Onsite telephone</li> <li>■ E-mail and telephone directory</li> <li>■ Workforce office plan</li> <li>■ Lodging and dining plan as appropriate</li> </ul>		
30	Occupy workspace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stow gear and equipment</li> <li>■ Store vital files, records and databases</li> <li>■ Test telephone, fax, e-mail, radio and other communications</li> <li>■ Establish communications with essential support elements and office elements</li> </ul>		
31	Ensure all critical equipment, critical software and vital files, records and databases are available at alternate facility location		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
32	Coordinate procurement of additional equipment, as required		
<b>Reconstitution</b>			
33	Resume operations		
34	Inventory and salvage useable equipment, materials, records and supplies from destroyed facility		
35	Survey condition of office building and determine feasibility of salvaging, restoring or returning to original offices when emergency subsides or is terminated		
36	Develop long-term reconstitution and recovery plans		
37	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
38	Conduct transition of all functions, personnel and equipment from alternate location back to designated facility		
39	Determine loss of the department's inventory for insurance report		
40	Schedule initial review meeting with clients, the public and vendors to do a briefing		
41	Develop and communicate a press release		



## **PHASE VII – MAINTENANCE**

The Maintenance Phase consists of the following:

- Creating program management procedures;
- Addressing budget and financial issues related to program maintenance and risk mitigation strategies; and
- Instituting a multi-year process to ensure the plan is updated, when necessary.

### **Program Management**

The COOP program ensures that the COOP plan reflects the current local government's environment and that personnel are prepared to respond during COOP plan implementation. Several overarching COOP management processes need to be formalized and documented by the COOP Team. Some of these processes are:

- Overall program management to coordinate all COOP projects;
- Overall COOP financial management;
- Internal and external communications including public information;
- Overall command and control structure to provide strategic guidance and set performance objectives across departments;
- Coordination of command and control processes, especially between executive administration, the COOP Team and department leadership;
- Legal and regulatory processes to ensure COOP planning stays in sync with legal and regulatory changes;
- A commitment to budgeting for COOP-related costs;
- Multi-year strategy for the COOP budget, listing costs and benefits. The budget for COOP programs should be linked to other emergency preparedness initiatives;
- Plan maintenance that includes regular meetings of the COOP Team, multi-year strategic planning and a multi-year testing, training and exercise program;
- Integration of COOP planning with other emergency management programs such as the EOP and Hazard Mitigation Plan; and
- Overall coordination of personnel and human resource management processes.

Examples of COOP related budget considerations include:

- Staffing any COOP or emergency planning positions;
- Accounting for and accommodating COOP and other team members' time expenditures on planning efforts;
- Funding capital improvement projects needed to mitigate risks and correct vulnerabilities; and
- Supporting personnel training needs.

## **COOP Maintenance Plan for Local Government**

Plan revisions due to changes in the local government's structure, essential functions or mission should be made promptly. Long-term plan maintenance should be undertaken carefully, planned for in advance and completed according to an established schedule.

Major issues to consider in COOP plan maintenance include:

- Distributing and communicating the COOP plan;
- Designating the review team;
- Identifying issues that impact the frequency of changes required to the COOP plan; and
- Establishing a review cycle.

A comprehensive strategy for plan maintenance includes elements that ensure a viable COOP capability such as:

- Department-specific management and policy issues addressing COOP planning;
- Schedule for establishing COOP capability and plan approval; and
- Budget considerations required to accomplish strategy.

Localities should develop a continuity multiyear strategy and program management plan that provides for the development, maintenance and annual review of continuity capabilities, requiring a locality to:

- Designate and review essential functions as applicable.
- Define both short-term and long-term goals and objectives for plans and procedures.
- Identify issues, concerns, and potential obstacles to implementing the program as well as a strategy for addressing these, as appropriate.
- Establish planning, training and exercise activities, as well as milestones for accomplishing these activities.
- Identify the people, infrastructure, communications, transportation and other resources needed to support the program.
- Forecast and establish budgetary requirements to support the program.
- Apply risk management principles to ensure that appropriate operational readiness decisions are based on the probability of an attack or other incident and its consequences.
- Incorporate geographic dispersion into the organization's normal daily operations, as appropriate.
- Integrate the organization's security strategies that address personnel, physical and adversaries from disrupting continuity plans and operations.

- Develop and implement corrective actions that draw upon evaluations, after-action reports, and lessons learned from TT&E and real world events.

At this time the above requirements are not mandated but recognized by VDEM as a best practice.

An example of a COOP plan maintenance schedule is detailed in the sample below.

**Table 7**  
**Sample COOP Plan Maintenance Schedule**

Activity	Tasks	Frequency
Plan update and certification	Review entire plan for accuracy. Incorporate lessons learned and changes in policy and philosophy. Manage distribution.	Annually
Maintain orders of succession and delegations of authority	Identify current incumbents. Update rosters and contact information.	Semiannually
Maintain alternate location readiness	Check all systems. Verify accessibility. Cycle supplies and equipment, as necessary.	Monthly
Monitor and maintain vital records program	Monitor volume of materials. Update or remove files.	Ongoing
Revise COOP Plan Implementation Checklist and contact information for key personnel	Update and revise COOP Plan Execution Procedures Checklist. Confirm or update key personnel information.	Annually Monthly
Train new personnel	Conduct COOP plan awareness training for new personnel.	Within 30 days of hire
Orient new senior leadership	Brief senior leadership on existence and concepts of the COOP plan. Brief senior leadership on their responsibilities under the COOP plan.	Within 30 days of appointment
Plan and conduct exercises	Conduct internal COOP plan exercises Conduct joint exercises with other departments or jurisdictions.	Quarterly, Semiannually, annually, or as needed

## ANNEX A: ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

### Acronyms

<b>AAR</b>	After Action Report
<b>COG</b>	Continuity of Government
<b>COOP</b>	Continuity of Operations
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>DRT</b>	Disaster Recovery Team
<b>EAS</b>	Emergency Alert System
<b>EMAC</b>	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
<b>EMAP</b>	Emergency Management Accreditation Program
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>HSEEP</b>	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
<b>ICS</b>	Incident Command System
<b>ITDR</b>	Information Technology Disaster Recovery
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NIMS</b>	National Incident Management System
<b>NWS</b>	National Weather Service
<b>SMA</b>	Statewide Mutual Aid

### Definitions

**Activation** – When all or a portion of the COOP plan has been put into motion.

**Alternate Facility Location** – A location, other than the normal facility used to process data or conduct essential functions during an event. Similar terms include Alternate Processing Facility, Alternate Office Facility and Alternate Communication Facility.

**Business Impact Analysis** – The process of determining the potential consequences of a disruption or degradation of business functions.

**Checklist** – A list of the immediate actions to take once the COOP plan is activated. The checklist is a quick reference of important telephone numbers, actions, equipment, etc. in the plan.

**Cold Site** – An alternate facility that is void of any resources or equipment except air-conditioning and raised flooring. Equipment and resources must be installed in such a facility to duplicate the essential functions of an organization. Cold sites have many variations depending on their communication facilities, UPS systems or mobility. Similar terms include Shell Site; Back-up Site; Recovery Site; Alternate Site.

**Continuity of Government (COG)** - Preservation of the institution of government. Maintaining leadership, through succession of leadership, delegation of authority and active command and control.

**Continuity of Operations (COOP)** – The effort to assure that the capability exists to continue essential functions across a wide range of potential emergencies.

**Continuity of Operations Coordinator** – Someone responsible for overall recovery of a division(s). This person also provides overall project management to ensure the quality and timely delivery of the Business Impact Analysis, Vulnerability and Risk Analysis and COOP plan.

**Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan** – A set of documented procedures developed to provide for the continuance of essential business functions during an emergency.

**Delegations of Authorities** – This list specifies who is authorized to act on behalf of the division head and other key officials for specific purposes.

**Devolution** –The capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from a jurisdiction’s primary operating personnel and facilities to other personnel and facilities and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

**Emergency Management Assistance Compact** – A congressionally ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. During a disaster, it allows a state to request and receive assistance from other member states.

**Emergency Preparedness** – The discipline which ensures an organization or community's readiness to respond to an emergency in a coordinated, timely and effective manner.

**Essential Functions** – Activities, processes or functions which could not be interrupted or unavailable for several days without significantly jeopardizing operation of the division.

**Facilities** – A location containing the equipment, supplies, voice and data communication lines to conduct transactions required to conduct business under normal conditions. Similar terms include Primary Site, Primary Processing Facility and Primary Office Facility.

**Hot Site** – An alternate facility that has the equipment and resources to recover the business functions affected by an event. Hot Sites may vary in type of facilities offered (such as data processing, communication or any other critical business functions needing duplication). Location and size of the Hot Site will be proportional to the equipment and resources needed. Similar terms include Back-up Site, Recovery Site, Recovery Center and Alternate Processing Site.

**Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)** – A threat and performance-based exercise program developed by DHS that provides doctrine and policy for planning, conducting and evaluating exercises. It was developed to enhance and assess terrorism prevention, response, and recovery capabilities at the federal, state and local levels.

**Implementation Procedure Checklist** – A list of the immediate actions to take once the COOP plan is implemented.

**Incident Command System** – The operating characteristics, management components and structure of incident management and emergency response operations used throughout an incident.

**Internal Call List** – Standard format for an emergency-call tree for personnel within the scope of the project. Also known as the personnel contact list.

**Key Personnel** – Personnel designated by their division as critical to the resumption of essential functions and services.

**National Incident Management System (NIMS)** – A consistent nationwide template that enables federal, state, local, tribal governments, private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity including acts of catastrophic terrorism.

**Orders of Succession and Succession of Leadership** – A list that specifies by position who will automatically fill a position once it is vacated.

**Reconstitution** – The process by which local government personnel resume normal business operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

**Record Retention** – Storing historical documentation for a set period of time, usually mandated by state and federal law or the Internal Revenue Service.

**Recovery** – Recovery, in this document, includes all types of emergency actions dedicated to the continued protection of the public or to promote the resumption of normal activities in the affected area.

**Recovery Time Objective** – The period from the disaster declaration to the recovery of the essential functions.

**Response** – Those activities and programs designed to address the immediate and short-term effects of the onset of an event.

**Risk** – An ongoing or impending concern that has a significant probability of adversely affecting good business continuity.

**Risk Assessment and Analysis** – The process of identifying and minimizing the exposures to certain threats, which a division may experience. Similar terms include Risk Assessment, Impact Assessment, Corporate Loss Analysis, Risk Identification, Exposure Analysis and Exposure Assessment.

**Risk Management** – The discipline which ensures that an organization does not assume an unacceptable level of risk.

**Statewide Mutual Aid** – A program developed to assist localities to more effectively and efficiently exchange services and resources in response to declared disasters and emergencies. SMA is a local government program established in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program provides a framework for resolution of some inter-jurisdictional issues and for reimbursement for the cost of services.

**Test Plan** – The recovery plans and procedures that are used in a systems test to ensure viability. A test plan is designed to exercise specific action tasks and procedures that would be encountered in a real disaster.

**Vital Records, Systems and Equipment** – Records, files, documents or databases, which, if damaged or destroyed, would cause considerable inconvenience or require replacement or re-

creation at considerable expense. For legal, regulatory or operational reasons these records cannot be irretrievably lost or damaged without materially impairing the organization's ability to conduct business.

**Vulnerability** – The susceptibility of a division to a hazard. The degree of vulnerability to a hazard depends upon its risk and consequences.

**Warm Site** – An alternate processing site which is only partially equipped.

## **ANNEX: B WORKSHEETS**

The use of the theses worksheets is optional. They are tools to help you gather the raw data needed to develop the COOP plan. You may modify them to fit the needs of the jurisdiction.

Worksheet #1: Essential Functions Description and Priority

Worksheet #2: Vital Records, Systems and Equipment

Worksheet #3: Vital Records, Systems and Equipment Protection Methods

Worksheet #4: External Contact List

Worksheet #5: Current Organization Chart

Worksheet #6: Orders of Succession

Worksheet #7: Delegations of Authority

Worksheet #8: Summary of Resource Requirements for Essential Functions

Worksheet #9: Requirements for Alternate Facilities

Worksheet #10: Alternate Facilities Options

Worksheet #11: Alternative Modes of Communication

Worksheet #12: Personnel Contact List (Rapid Recall List)

Worksheet #13: COOP Plan Implementation Procedures Checklist

Worksheet #14: Local Government Function Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

Worksheet #15: Facility Risk and Vulnerability Assessment



## Worksheet #1: Essential Functions Description and Priority

List the functions identified by the COOP Team or the department. Briefly describe the function and why it is essential. Next, assign a priority number in column 3, giving higher numbers to those functions that can be inoperable for longer periods of time. Additionally, more than one function may have comparable priority. Therefore, a department can assign the same priority number to multiple functions. The goal is to determine which functions would need to be operating first in case resources are not available for all functions to be operating immediately. Finally, designate its recovery time objective (RTO) or the period of time in which the essential function must be recovered after an interruption.

Function	Description of Function	Priority	RTO

## Worksheet #2: Vital Records, Systems and Equipment

List the records, systems and equipment that are necessary for essential functions for up to thirty days. Include the networks or servers that must be operational as well to support the equipment and systems. Records can be in electronic or paper form. If it is electronic, list the software used. Also, identify the type of vital record – active, static or court.

Do not include records, systems or equipment that may be useful but are not essential to performing the service.

Essential Function	Vital Record	Equipment or Systems	Networks or Servers that must be Operational to Support the Critical System or Equipment	Description	Form and Type of Record or System	RTO
<i>Paying personnel</i>	<i>Payroll Records</i>	<i>Computer; Pay-All software systems</i>	<i>Intel Network</i>	<i>Records are needed to pay personnel</i>	<i>Electronic; Active</i>	<i>Less than 72 hours</i>
<i>Cash Flow Management</i>	<i>Cash Balances</i>	<i>Computer</i>	<i>Direct Website</i>	<i>Monitoring of cash balances and transfers</i>	<i>Electronic, Active</i>	<i>0 to 12 hours</i>

### Worksheet #3: Vital Records, Systems and Equipment Protection Methods

For each vital record, system or equipment identified in Worksheet #2, list where the records are kept or where the equipment or systems reside; how often they are backed up, revised or maintained; and any particular methods of protection including security measures. Those vital records, systems or equipment that have no protection, other than back-up or duplicate copies might be candidates for additional protection measures. In those cases, consider and recommend additional protection methods in the last column.

<b>Vital Record, Systems, Equipment</b>	<b>Storage Location</b>	<b>Maintenance Frequency</b>	<b>Current Protection Method(s)</b>	<b>Recommendations for Additional Protection Method(s) (if necessary)</b>	<b>Vendor Contacts</b>

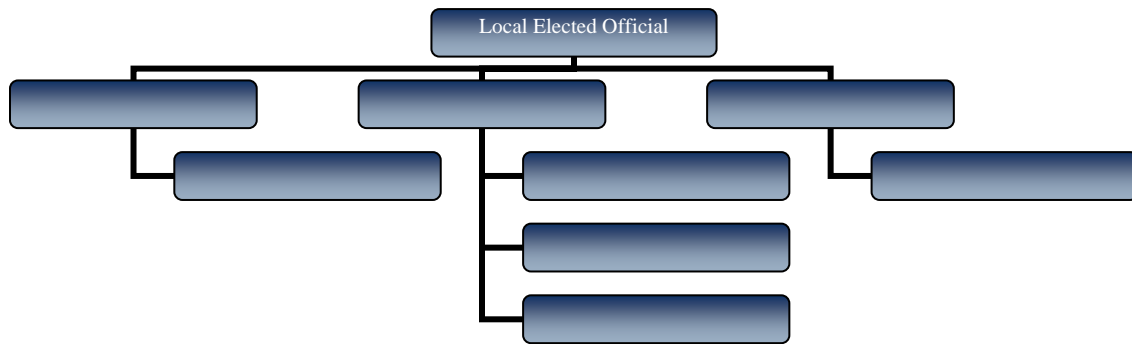
### Worksheet #4: External Contact List

The External Contact List is a list of critical external and vendor contact information. The list should include all vendors and external agencies or resources that are called upon by jurisdictions during day-to-day operations as well as emergencies.

External Contact	Point of Contact	E-mail Address	Office #	Cellular or Pager #	Customer Service #

## Worksheet #5: Current Organization Chart

Using the example organization chart below, complete an organizational chart for the local government if one does not already exist. In the chart, remember to provide the title of the department. Also, be sure to include the title, function and name of the individual for each position.



## Worksheet #6: Orders of Succession

Using this worksheet, designate the appropriate orders of succession for each essential function. In the first column, list the essential functions located in Worksheet #1, Priority of Essential Functions. In the second column, list the key position or person who is essential to performing the function. Then in the remaining columns, list the positions that would serve as successors if the key position or person is unavailable unexpectedly i.e., illness, injury, vacation or termination of employment, among others. The same successors might be named for different key positions, but avoid designating the same position or person as the first successor to several key positions. Be sure to include both the title of the position and the individual who fills the position in each box.

Essential Function	Key Personnel	Successor 1	Successor 2	Successor 3

### Worksheet #7: Delegations of Authority

Identify the function and the type of authority to be delegated. List the position currently holding the authority and who the authority will be delegated to. Then list the triggering conditions under which the authority would be delegated, the procedures to operate under and the limitations of the authority. The first row provides an example.

Authority (Function)	Type of Authority	Position Holding Authority	Delegation to Position	Triggering Conditions	Procedures	Limitations
<i>Contracts</i>	<i>Signature Authority</i>	<i>Attorney</i>	<i>Assistant Attorney</i>	<i>Incapacitated or unavailable</i>	<i>Internal policy</i>	<i>Upon return of the incumbent</i>

## Worksheet #8: Summary of Resource Requirements for Essential Functions

Worksheet #8 summarizes the resource requirements for essential functions into a single worksheet. Using information gathered in Worksheets 1, 2, 4 and 6, transfer the relevant information to the appropriate column in Worksheet #8.

Essential Function	Essential Personnel and Back-up	Vendors and External Contacts	Vital Records	Equipment	Systems	RTO



## Worksheet #9: Requirements for Alternate Facilities

Identify the requirements for the alternate location by department. An alternate facility is a location, other than the normal facility, used to carry out essential functions in a COOP plan activation. Requirements include personnel, back-up power, communications and space requirements.

Essential Function	Number of Personnel	Back - up Power	Communications	Space Requirements

## Worksheet #10: Alternate Facilities Options

Local governments should identify at least two to three alternate facilities. One location can be close to the current operations – not right next door, but within a short distance. The second alternate facility should be further away – at least five miles from the primary facility. A third alternate facility should be located within 30 miles to 60 miles away.

Facility	Address	Agreement	Date Executed	Security	Secure Storage Available?	Special Notes

## Worksheet #11: Alternative Modes of Communication

For each mode of communication listed, identify the current provider, alternative providers and/or alternative modes of communication. Communication systems already in place can be named as alternative modes for other modes of communication. For example, radios could be an alternative mode of communication for voice lines.

Communication System	Current Provider	Alternative Provider	Alternative Mode #1	Alternative Mode #2
<b>Voice Lines</b>				
<b>Fax Lines</b>				
<b>Data Lines</b>				
<b>Cellular telephones</b>				
<b>Pagers</b>				
<b>E-mail</b>				
<b>Internet Access</b>				
<b>Instant Messenger Services</b>				
<b>Blackberry and Other Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)</b>				
<b>Radio Communication Systems</b>				
<b>Satellite Telephones</b>				
<b>Other</b>				

## Worksheet #12: Personnel Contact List (Rapid Recall List)

The Personnel Contact List is a short document with a cascade call list and other critical telephone numbers. The cascade list should include the COOP Team, key personnel and emergency personnel, both inside and outside the local jurisdiction. If this information is available in another document reference the information here or in the plan.

<b>Employee Cascade List</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>	<b>Work #</b>	<b>Home #</b>	<b>Cellular or Pager #</b>
<b>Local Elected Official</b>				
<b>COOP Team</b>				
▪ <b>Employee A</b>				
▪ <b>Employee B</b>				
▪ <b>Employee C</b>				
▪ <b>Employee D</b>				
▪ <b>Employee E</b>				
<b>Key Personnel and Management</b>				
▪ <b>Employee I</b>				
▪ <b>Employee J</b>				
▪ <b>Employee K</b>				
▪ <b>Employee L</b>				
▪ <b>Employee M</b>				

<b>Emergency Personnel</b>	<b>Telephone Number(s)</b>
<b>Fire Department</b>	
<b>Police Department</b>	
<b>Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services</b>	
<b>State and Local Emergency Operations Center</b>	
<b>Employee Emergency</b>	

<b>Hotline</b>	
<b>Alternate Facility Contacts</b>	

### Worksheet #13: Sample COOP Plan Implementation Procedures Checklist

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
<b>Activation and Relocation</b>			
1	Receive notification of event		
2	If necessary, conduct evacuation		
3	Conduct a headcount of personnel		
4	If necessary, contact Emergency Responders (fire, police, EMS)		
5	Ensure that safety measures are put into effect		
6	Contact the Building Maintenance Department for shutting down utilities to limit further damage		
7	Direct and assist emergency personnel, as required		
8	If needed, invoke succession of leadership		
9	Initiate personnel notification using Rapid Recall List		
10	Activate the department's Continuity of Operations Plan		
11	Hold department's response meeting at predetermined site		
12	Assemble supporting elements required for re-establishing and performing essential functions at alternate location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vital files, records and databases</li> <li>■ Critical software</li> <li>■ Critical equipment</li> </ul>		
13	Assemble remaining documents required for performance of all other essential functions to be performed at the alternate location		
14	Initiate external communication for applicable external contacts		
15	Prepare designated communications and other equipment for relocation		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
16	Take appropriate preventive measures to protect other communications and equipment that will not be relocated		
17	Make computer connectivity and telephone line transfers to designated alternate location		
18	Ensure drive-away kits are complete and ready for transfer		
19	Begin movement of key personnel to alternate location		
20	Provide support to local Emergency Operations Center, if required		
21	Develop detailed status of situation for senior leadership		
22	Notify remaining personnel and appropriate departments for movement to alternate location		
<b>Alternate Facility Operations</b>			
23	Notify other local departments, customers, state and surrounding jurisdictions that operations have shifted to alternate location		
24	Organize personnel and account for non-essential personnel		
25	Develop shift rotations		
26	Determine which essential functions have been affected		
27	Develop status report		
28	Prioritize essential functions for restoration		
29	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
30	Administrative actions to assemble such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ On-site telephone</li> <li>■ E-mail and telephone directory</li> <li>■ Workforce office plan</li> <li>■ Lodging and dining plan as appropriate</li> </ul>		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
31	Occupy workspace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stow gear and equipment</li> <li>■ Store vital files, records and databases</li> <li>■ Test telephone, fax, e-mail, radio and other communications</li> <li>■ Establish communications with essential support elements and office elements</li> </ul>		
32	Ensure all critical equipment, critical software and vital files, records and databases are available at alternate location		
33	Coordinate procurement of additional equipment, as required		
<b>Reconstitution</b>			
34	Resume operations		
35	Appoint logistics manager		
36	Inventory and salvage useable equipment, materials, records and supplies from destroyed facility		
37	Survey condition of office building and determine feasibility of salvaging, restoring or returning to original offices when emergency subsides or is terminated		
38	Develop long-term reconstitution and recovery plans		
39	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
40	Conduct transition of all functions, personnel and equipment from alternate location back to designated facility		
41	Determine loss of the department's inventory for insurance report		
42	Schedule initial review meeting with clients, public and vendors to hold a briefing		
43	Develop and communicate a press release		



## Worksheet #14: Local Government Function Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

The local government's Risk and Vulnerability Assessment is an evaluation of a jurisdiction's risks and vulnerabilities that have the potential for consequences in terms of property damage, interruption of essential functions or possible human injury. Two examples are provided.

**Risk:** Probability of how likely is an event to occur to expose this risk? (H - within 5 years; M - within 25 years; L - within 50 years)

**Vulnerability:** How severe is the potential impact if this risk is not addressed?

(H - More than 25 percent of essential functions impacted; M - 5 percent to 25 percent of essential functions impacted; L - <5 percent of essential functions impacted)

If a risk assessment has not previously been completed, use the following worksheet to identify current risk and vulnerabilities faced by local governments.

**Local Government Function Risk Overview**

Risk Overview	Risk Level	Vulnerability	Description or Comment
Local government's succession plans not in place	H	H	Currently there are no succession plans in place for City leadership
Inadequate alternate site recovery procedures			
Inadequate building and physical security			
Inadequate fire suppression equipment	L	L	All facilities are equipped with fire suppression equipment
Inadequate off-site storage of documents and files			
Inadequate record and file back-up procedures and record keeping			
Insufficient staffing or training			
Insufficient virus and hacker protection			
Key employee back-ups either not designated or not			

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>sufficiently cross-trained</b>			
<b>Lack of alternate voice and emergency communications networks</b>			
<b>Lack of interoperability of emergency communications networks</b>			
<b>No adequate alternate site designated</b>			
<b>No alternate power sources for department location</b>			
<b>No secure fire protected onsite storage of documents and files</b>			
<b>Single point of failure for equipment and or networks</b>			
<b>Unsafe physical condition of department office or building</b>			
<b>Lack of procedures and testing for record and file recovery</b>			

## Worksheet #15: Facility Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

A facility Risk and Vulnerability Assessment is an evaluation of the facility risks and vulnerabilities that have the potential for consequences of property damage, business interruption or human injury.

Note: This worksheet should be completed for each key facility and by the person responsible for facility maintenance either within the local jurisdiction or building. Local governments can refer to their existing Hazard Mitigation Plan for additional facility risk and vulnerabilities that may have been identified.

**Risk Level:** H - applies at all times; M - applies only some of the time; L - rarely applies

**Vulnerability:** H - impact to the operations will be great if the event did occur; M - impacts some of the operations, but not all of the operations; L - minimal impact to critical operations

### Facility Risk Overview – Air Conditioning

Risk Overview	Risk Y/N	Risk Level	Vulnerability	Description or Comment
Are air conditioning system and power supply separate from the rest of the facility?				
Is there back-up air conditioning available?				
Are switches easily accessible?				
Are air conditioning and emergency shutoff switches linked?				

### Facility Risk Overview – Electricity and Telecommunications

Risk Overview	Risk Y/N	Risk Level	Vulnerability	Description or Comment
Where are generators and transformers located?				
Is there an emergency lighting system for facility?				
Is the facility protected against power surges?				

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Are there back-up power sources available to facility? Please specify.</b>				
<b>Do alternate voice and data transmission services exist?</b>				
<b>Is there a shutdown checklist provided in case of emergency?</b>				

#### Facility Risk Overview – Facility Access Control

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>What are the procedures to guard against vandalism, sabotage and unauthorized intrusion?</b>				
<b>Are there windows that can be broken to gain access to the facility?</b>				
<b>What are the procedures for personnel to handle unauthorized intruders?</b>				
<b>What are the procedures for personnel to handle bomb threats?</b>				
<b>What are the procedures for personnel to handle notification of local law enforcement?</b>				
<b>Are security devices checked and tested on</b>				

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>a regular basis?</b>				
<b>Are there access controls during regular hours to facility?</b>				
<b>Are there access controls during off-hours to facility?</b>				

#### **Facility Risk Overview – Fire Exposure**

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Are the areas surrounding the facility protected from fire? Please specify.</b>				
<b>Are the flooring and ceiling materials non-combustible?</b>				
<b>Can the walls in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				
<b>Can the doors in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				
<b>Can the partitions in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				
<b>Can the floors in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				
<b>Can the furniture in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				
<b>Can the window coverings in the facility resist the spread of fire?</b>				

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Does the facility have adequate automatic fire extinguishing systems?</b>				
<b>Are flammable or otherwise dangerous materials and activities prohibited from the facility and surrounding areas?</b>				
<b>Are paper and other supplies stored in open areas in the facility?</b>				
<b>Is there fire and smoke detection equipment in facility?</b>				
<b>Are portable fire extinguishers in suitable locations?</b>				
<b>Are clear and adequate fire instructions clearly posted?</b>				
<b>Are the fire alarm switches clearly visible, unobstructed and easily accessible at points of exit?</b>				
<b>Can the fire alarm be activated manually?</b>				
<b>Is there an emergency evacuation exit, different from the main entrance or exit?</b>				
<b>Is there an evacuation plan posted?</b>				
<b>Does emergency power shut down the</b>				

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>air conditioning?</b>				
<b>Is fire and smoke detection equipment checked and tested on a regular basis? How often?</b>				
<b>Can emergency crews easily gain access to the facility?</b>				
<b>Are fire drills held on a regular basis? How often?</b>				

#### **Facility Risk Overview – General Housekeeping**

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Is the facility kept clean and orderly?</b>				
<b>Are food and beverages confined to a designated area?</b>				
<b>Is smoking banned in the facility?</b>				
<b>Is there adequate lighting for all areas?</b>				

### Facility Risk Overview – Organization and Personnel or Other

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Are personnel responsible for facility security?</b>				
<b>Have recovery teams for the facility been selected in the event of a disaster?</b>				
<b>Are there mail or package handling procedures posted? (e.g. chemical or biological or explosives)</b>				

### Facility Risk Overview – Other Natural Disaster Exposures

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Are you aware of the wind tolerance of the facility? Please specify.</b>				
<b>Is the facility in or near a flood plain?</b>				
<b>Are flood mitigation procedures in place?</b>				
<b>Is all of the electrical equipment grounded for protection against lightning?</b>				



### Facility Risk Overview – Water Damage

<b>Risk Overview</b>	<b>Risk Y/N</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Vulnerability</b>	<b>Description or Comment</b>
<b>Are documents, records and equipment stored above ground and protected from flooding?</b>				
<b>Are lower facility rooms protected from leaks in overhead water pipes?</b>				
<b>Is there protection against accumulated rainwater or leaks in the rooftop?</b>				
<b>Are floor level electrical junction boxes protected?</b>				